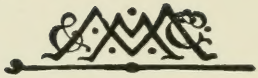
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GREAT MORAL TEACHERS.



Philos. Ethics. B519

GREAT MORAL TEACHERS

EIGHT LECTURES

DELIVERED IN SALISBURY CATHEDRAL

BY

EDWARD RUSSELL BERNARD, M.A.

CHANCELLOR OF THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH

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PREFACE.

THESE lectures were delivered in Salisbury Cathedral in the years 1903-4, in fulfilment of the statutory duty of the Chancellor of the Cathedral. I should not have ventured to publish the three first lectures had they stood alone. They make no pretence to originality, and are simply an attempt to exhibit clearly the differences and correspondences in principles and method between Confucius, Gotama, Socrates, and Christ in their aspect as moral teachers. But the lectures on Epictetus which follow may perhaps claim more value, and are at any rate the result of a more thorough study. If they were to be published, it appeared necessary to prefix to them the other three lectures, as the comparative method which has been adopted necessitated frequent reference to prae-Christian ethical thought, as

previously dealt with. No attempt has been made to recast the lectures into another form, and they therefore bear the character required by the mixed audience to which they were delivered. Technical terms and Greek words have been avoided where they would naturally be expected by the scholar, though it is hoped that sufficient indication has been given, by footnotes and otherwise, to make the lectures useful to those who read Epictetus in the original.

Considering the circumstances under which the lectures were given, it will naturally be expected that a definite religious aim should be distinguishable in them. The aim was to combat the growing impression that other ethical systems may be substituted for Christianity as a rule of human conduct. There are perhaps many educated persons who, without any real intention of abandoning the Christian faith, are so much attracted by what is true and beautiful in non-Christian ethics, that their sense of the absolute need of the Gospel for the regeneration of human nature has been much weakened. The simple courage, honesty, and self-control of Epictetus come to them as a discovery,

and a personal discovery always tends to be over-valued by those who make it.

It seemed to me that the true course under such circumstances was not so much to search for ethical defects in the pagan moralists, though these undoubtedly exist, but rather, while recognising their excellences and coincidences with Gospel teaching, to endeavour to show the insecurity or absolute falsity of the premises on which their systems were built, and the absence of that adequate motive which the Christian faith supplies wherever it is fully received.

I had thought of attempting in a concluding lecture to sketch in outline the ethical teaching of Christ, which has been touched at different points in a fragmentary way in the course of the lectures. But the task would be a serious one, and I am the more content to leave it unattempted, as I can refer the reader to a far abler treatment of that subject than I am capable of in Dr. Illingworth's *Christian Character*, especially in chapter vi., 'The Cardinal Virtues.'

It remains to acknowledge my indebtedness

to various writers, to most of which I have frequently referred:

CONFUCIUS. *Life and Teachings of Confucius*, Dr. Legge; *Confucianism and Taoism*, Sir R. K. Douglas.

SOCRATES. Zeller's *Socrates*, tr. O. J. Reichel; *Trial and Death of Socrates*, 'Golden Treasury Series'; Introductions to the 'Dialogues' in Jowett's *Plato*.

GOTAMA. *Sacred Books of the East*, vols. XI. and XIII.; Oldenburg's *Buddha*; *Buddhism in Ceylon*, Bishop Copleston; *Buddhism*, in 'S.P.C.K. Series,' Rhys Davids.

EPICTETUS. Zeller's *Stoicism*, tr. O. J. Reichel; Capes, *Stoicism*; Dill, *Roman Society*; C. Martha, *Les Moralistes Romaines*; Ritter and Preller, *Hist. Philos. Græcae*, ed. viii.

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GREAT MORAL TEACHERS.

FIRST SERIES.

LECTURE I.

CONFUCIUS.

I HAVE chosen as a subject for the present course of lectures three great moral teachers. Another course will, I hope, deal much more fully with a fourth, namely, Epictetus as a representative of Stoicism. The three whom we are now to deal with belong to three great early types of civilisation totally distinct in character, namely, those of China, Hindustan, and Greece, and all belong to one century, the fifth century B.C.

Why should we study in this Cathedral these non-Christian teachers? Why should we, with whatever reservations, call them Rabbi, when for us there is but one Master even Christ? Many sufficient reasons might be given, but there is one which has chiefly

influenced my choice. The comparison of these teachers with our Master will bring out the uniqueness of His character and work and enable us to understand Him better.

Yet I do not enter on the comparison by way of depreciation. It would be almost profane to do so. For in these great heathen teachers there was some divine guidance. I cannot, of course, assent to the notion of a primitive world-wide religion of which the great heathen thinkers preserve and expound the relics. Such a conception is quite unscientific. The truth is something greater and more hopeful. Justin Martyr, in his second Apology, expresses a belief of a different kind, to which we may well assent. What was true in heathen philosophers and poets, and in popular belief, was all of it the gift of the *Logos*, the eternal Word. The Word was disseminated in the world like seed, till Jesus was born. Then in Him we received no longer parts or fragments, but the whole Word of God.[1] This is not much more than a development of St. John i. 9: 'That was the true Light that lighteth every man.' Thus we may regard all that is best

[1] Justin Martyr, App. II. viii.

in the moral teaching of the heathen world as inspired by God. And we can approach these teachers with reverence, not regarding them as the chiefs of hostile systems. We have in the field of Missions a conflict with some of those systems, but it is with them in their present degraded and corrupted state, not in their original sources.

Now let us proceed to the subject of to-day's lecture, Confucius. His life lies between 551 and 479 B.C. What a great century in the world's history was this fifth century B.C. We know it best perhaps in its place in Greek history, as the century of Persian invasion and of Athenian sway; or again, further east, as the century of the revival of Jewish national life under Ezra and Nehemiah. Its earlier years include a part, but not all, of the teaching of Confucius. We may claim him for it in virtue of the last twenty years of his life, which are the first twenty of that century. The dates of Gotama's life are less certain, but probably he was very nearly contemporary with Confucius. Then, towards the close of the same century, comes Socrates, born B.C. 468, shortly after the death of the

two other teachers, and dying in the first year of the next century, B.C. 399.

The name Confucius is the Latinised form of Kung Fu Tze, Kung the Master, Kung being his family name. Something must be said as to the state of China at that time. Though nominally an empire under the rulers of Chow, it consisted in fact of thirteen states governed by hereditary and almost independent dukes, who were, however, in some cases puppets in the hands of certain noble families from which their ministers were drawn. The native state of Confucius was that of Loo, but his wandering life led him, as we shall presently see, from one state to another.

I am not competent to discuss the value of the materials for the life and sayings of the Sage. What I have to say with regard to himself and his teaching is drawn from the *Analects*, consisting of twenty short books, recording conversations between Confucius and his disciples, fragmentary remarks prefaced by 'the Master said'; and, moreover, descriptions of the Master, his appearance and personal habits. To this source must be added certain sayings of Confucius preserved in another work, the *Doctrine of the Mean.*

These have been translated by Dr. Legge, and form the first volume of his *Chinese Classics*.[1] But for a thorough study of early Confucianism some attention would have to be given to the *Great Learning*, and the works of Mencius. These also have been translated by Dr. Legge.

I must say a few words as to the personal history of 'the Master.' His native state, Loo, was situated to the east of the present course of the Yellow River, and is now included in the province of Shantung, in Northern China. He was born in poverty, and probably was self-educated. At the age of nineteen he married, and obtained a small government post. Three years later he began to teach, not in any official way, but just receiving those who came to him. 'The Master said, From the man bringing his bundle of dried flesh (as payment) upwards, I have never refused instruction to any one.'[2] The dried flesh was the lowest school fee. But he required eagerness to learn. 'The Master said, I do not open up the truth to

[1] This series is a reproduction of Dr. Legge's larger work which includes the Chinese texts.

[2] *Anal.* VII. vii.

one who is not eager to get knowledge, nor do I help out any one who is not anxious to explain himself. When I have presented one corner of a subject to any one, and he cannot from it learn the other three, I do not repeat my lesson.'[1] We need not follow the scanty and doubtful records of his travels and his interviews, but it is worth while to mention two events which belong to the period before 501 B.C. On his visit to the royal state of Chow, mentioned above, he visited Lao Tze, the founder of Taoism, which to this day, in a much degraded form, is the rival of Confucianism. Not much confidence can be placed in the account of what passed between them, but the contemptuous lecture which Lao Tze is said to have given his visitor is likely enough when we consider on the one hand Confucius' practical eagerness to make the world better and happier, and Lao Tze's doctrine of '*laissez faire*': 'Practise inaction, occupy yourself with doing nothing. Leave all things to take their natural course, and do not interfere.'[2] The other event deserv-

[1] *Anal.* VII. viii.

[2] For an interesting review of the traditions as to the intercourse of the two sages, see R. K. Douglas's *Confucianism and Taoism*, pp. 176-185.

ing of notice is the offer of a pension from the Duke of Ts'e, and the way in which it was met. Confucius refused the gift, and said to his disciples: 'A superior man will only receive reward for services which he has done. I have given advice to the Duke of Ts'e, but he has not obeyed it, and now he would endow me with this place! Very far is he from understanding me.' One such incident as this is enough to show the true nobility of the man, and to prove that he was no mere propounder of maxims.

At the age of fifty he at last accepted official employment in his native state under Duke Ting of Loo, and after holding lesser posts, became Minister of Crime. His administration is said to have been eminently successful, though his methods were certainly unusual, as instanced by the following story. A father having brought some charge against his son, Confucius kept them both in prison for three months without making any difference in favour of the father, and then wished to release them both. When asked why he did not put the son to death for his unfilial conduct, he said, 'Am I to punish for unfilial conduct one who has not been taught filial

duties? Is not he who fails to teach his son his duties, equally guilty with the son who fails to fulfil them?' He held that the father in the family and the government in the state were responsible for the crimes committed, and this was the outcome of his principle that human nature in itself is good. 'Let the government be good, and the people will be good.'

Then after three years in office the Duke of Loo is alienated from his minister by the devices of the Duke of Ts'e, this brief experience of the philosopher as ruler comes to an end, and Confucius leaves the court and goes forth to thirteen years of wandering from province to province followed by his disciples. Many of these disciples are mentioned by name in the *Analects*, so that in spite of the fragmentary character of the record, there is a real dramatic interest. Two of them are especially prominent, Yen Yuen and Tsze-Loo. Yen Yuen was throughout the beloved disciple, and the affectionate heart of Confucius could not refrain its grief at his loss. When Yen Yuen died the Master said, 'Heaven is destroying me, Heaven is destroying me.' Here and elsewhere we see

that Confucius was not a mere dry moralist, but a loving man. The other chief disciple is Tsze-Loo (or Yew), the Simon Peter, as he has been called, of the Confucian band, a man of impulse, prompt to act, and ready, sometimes too ready to speak. He ventured at times even to take his Master to task. Many things are recorded of him. This is perhaps the best. 'When Tsze-Loo heard anything, if he had not yet carried it into practice, he was afraid lest he should hear something else.'[1] The training of disciples was in the case of Confucius as in that of our Lord, a very important, and, indeed, the main work of his life. He asks them their wishes that he may discover if their hearts are set as he would have them; a smile is all that shows his disapproval, but it is enough for the faithful disciple.[2] 'Master, why did you smile at Yew? His words were not humble, therefore I smiled at him.' Again, he admitted men to discipleship without reference to their past conduct. 'If

[1] *Anal.* v. xiii. It will be found quite worth while to refer to all the passages in Dr. Legge's index relating to a particular disciple, and so to verify the consistent presentation of character which the *Analects* exhibit.

[2] *Anal.* XI. XXV.

a man purifies himself to wait upon me and be taught, I receive him as so purified without guaranteeing his past conduct.[1] This was his answer to the disciples who doubted when he received a lad from a neighbourhood which had a bad name. And to carry the parallel further, as Christ hid nothing from his disciples,[2] so Confucius says, 'Do you think I have any concealments? There is nothing that I do, which is not shown to you, my disciples.[3]

We now come to the last period of the Master's life. He returned to his native province at the age of 69, and died there at the age of 73 in B.C. 478. In his last moments he was full of despondency, his life seemed to him to have been an entire failure. 'No intelligent monarch arises, there is not one in the Empire that will make me his teacher.' The despondency can only be understood if we remember that it was not so much guidance of individual lives as the reform of government and amelioration of society which had been his aim. That could only have been accomplished by his

[1] *Anal.* VII. XXVIII.
[2] John XV. 15
[3] *Anal.* VII. XXIII.

being employed in high office, which had but once been the case for a very few years. Rejection had been his fate, as of other great teachers, or at least it had seemed to be.

But Confucius was no sooner dead than a temple was erected to him, and sacrifices began to be offered, which went on increasing, until the half-yearly worship of Confucius by the Emperor became the greatest religious ceremony in the land. For two thousand years, as Dr. Legge says, he has reigned the supreme undisputed teacher of the most populous country in the world.

This sketch of his personal work has been merely prefatory. It has perhaps been too full, but could hardly be dispensed with. Our interest lies not so much in his life as in the character of his teaching. For Confucianism is not a historic faith as Christianity is, nor even a faith at all, and therefore its importance is not centred in the life and death of its Founder, as is the case with the latter. In Christianity these are central, central and objective facts.

As I have just said, Confucianism was not a faith, and therefore was not a religion.

Earlier Chinese classics speak of a Supreme Being. Confucius never does. Now and then he vaguely alludes to Heaven as influencing human destiny and having regard to man, but we are told that he refused to speak of Heaven, spirits, and death. A disciple said, 'I venture to ask about death.' He was answered, 'While you do not know life, how can you know about death?'[1] Yet there are scanty indications of a deeper belief. In face of the want of appreciation by men, he could say, 'There is Heaven, that knows me.'[2] And again there is his conviction that the cause of truth is lodged in his person, and that Heaven will not let the cause of truth perish.[3] As there is nothing in his teaching about a future life, future retribution as a moral motive is necessarily absent. To his practical mind speculative toiling after uncertainties was worthless and everything outside actual experience was uncertain. He had no message given him on these subjects, and we cannot but approve the honesty which made him silent. Virtue must be practised for its own sake.

[1] *Anal.* XI. xi.
[2] *Anal.* XIV. XXXVII.
[3] *Anal.* IX. v.

Let us now attempt to deal with two of his leading ethical ideas. The first is that of 'the Five Relations.' These are five natural relations between man and man, each carrying with it its proper duties; the relations between sovereign and minister (or subject), father and son, husband and wife, brother and brother, friend and friend. Where these are duly and mutually fulfilled all will be well with the nation and the individuals. Here we have an anticipation of the Stoic doctrine of relative duties (*τὰ καθήκοντα*, *officia*) which played an important part in softening the hard individualism of Stoic ethics (see p. 135 *sqq.*). You will, of course, observe the contrast between Confucius' exposition of relative duties and the very similar statements of them in the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, where, besides the mutual relations of man to man, the whole scheme of duties is conceived as also in relation to God and to Christ. For instance, men are to be in submission one to another, but 'in the fear of God.'

Confucius held that there was a sufficient foundation in human nature for government and social order. It is found in the five rela-

tions enumerated above. If these are maintained nothing more is needed. Here there are two inferences which strike us at once.

Ethics for Confucius were social ethics. Like Aristotle, he regarded them as a sub division of politics. The stability of society was the first object. The welfare of the individual was involved in it. Danger to that stability (such as it is) is what the modern Chinaman fears in Christianity.

The other point which strikes us here is the political optimism of Confucius. There is, so he taught, a natural aptness to be governed as soon as a true ruler appears. Then crime will vanish, and punishments become unnecessary. The welfare of the people and their morality depend on their governors. 'Let the ruler advance the good and teach the incompetent, then they will eagerly seek to be virtuous.'[1]

The relation on which far the most stress is laid is, as we should expect, the filial relation. Its claims are perhaps exaggerated, but there

[1] *Anal.* II. XX. He did not realise that the order of society in a state must always rest ultimately on force, and we must not be severe on a mistake which is prevalent among a certain class of English politicians to-day.

is moral beauty in the exaggeration. Let me quote Bishop Westcott on this feature of the system: 'Confucius acknowledged the relation of Fatherhood as the basis of human life. So far he was on the way to bear the fulness of the Divine message to humanity. He saw that the father was the living lord of the family: that the Emperor was the father of the nation. His facts carried him no further, and he shrank from adventurous if splendid guesses. Yet we can see that the revelation of a true Divine Father in the Mission of Christ completes what Confucius began, and that his view of society illustrates the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men.'[1]

Before we proceed to the second characteristic of the Confucian ethics, we must notice the importance assigned in them to external ceremony, and to music, as means of maintaining the observance of the five relations. There is a great deal in the *Analects* about dress and deportment, not merely as to what the sage enjoined, but as to his own practice. Much of it will necessarily seem ludicrous to us, but that does not prove

[1] Westcott, *Gospel of Life*, ch. v. p. 141.

that it is so. It is perfectly true that these externals have a profound influence on the masses, and it is only a superficial view which considers them ridiculous. Again, ceremonial had a special value in an ethical system the basis of which was the maintenance of certain relations between individuals, and the deference from one class of persons in the family to another.[1] A few words must be added on the great value attached to music, or rather to the right kind of music, for there appear to have been kinds which were dangerous. 'It is by the rules of propriety (*i.e.* ceremonial and deportment) that the character is established. It is from music that the finish is received.'[2] To us the value assigned to music in moral training, both by Confucius and by Plato, is somewhat surprising, but a very little study of the history of religions goes far to confirm the fact of its importance.

Next to the conception of the Five Relations it is indispensable for the student of Confucius to grasp his conviction of the

[1] See Herbert Spencer, *Ceremonial Institutions*, § 412, §§ 429-433, where, however, the treatment is not adequate to the amount of illustration adduced.

[2] *Anal.* VIII. viii.

sufficiency of human nature for goodness, if properly cultivated. 'Tsang said, the doctrine of our Master is to be true to the principles of our nature.'[1] And again, there are the Master's own words: 'Is any one able for one day to apply his strength to virtue? I have not seen the case in which his strength would be insufficient. Should there possibly be any such case, I have not seen it.'[2] Under these words lies a belief in the strength of the human will, which finds expression in a remarkable saying: 'The Master said, The commander of the forces of a large state may be carried off, but the will of even a common man cannot be taken from him.'[3] This is a precise anticipation of Roman Stoicism, a link uniting two moral systems in most respects utterly divergent.

The idea of human perfectibility is embodied in the phrase, 'the superior man,' which in our day has unfortunately a touch of irony attaching to it. All through the *Analects* we are constantly hearing of this personage.

For example, Tsze-loo asked what constituted the superior man. The Master said

[1] *Anal.* IV. XVI. [2] *Anal.* IV. VI. [3] *Anal.* IX. XXV.

'the cultivation of himself in reverent carefulness.' And it is added that this self-cultivation will not be purely for his own benefit, but 'to give rest to others.' Self-culture will produce perfect virtue and bring character to the standard of the superior man. Here we find an essential contrast with Christianity, not merely as to our natural capacity for virtue, but as to self-culture. That notion has always a tendency to invade Christian thought, but it does not truly belong to it. According to the teaching of Christ and His Apostles our hope of moral progress does not lie in a moral self-culture analogous to intellectual culture, but in our personal relation to God in Christ and a life drawn from and directed towards Him. I say this in no spirit of depreciation of the teaching of Confucius. There is something touching in this ardent effort for self-improvement in the Master and his little band, in the daily self-examination, the reproofs bestowed and endured, the exposure of any insincerity or folly. Keu sent a messenger to Confucius, who questioned him on his arrival. 'What, said he, is your master engaged in? The messenger replied, My master is anxious to make his faults few,

but he has not yet succeeded.'[1] The superior man and perfect virtue are constant subjects of inquiry from the disciples, and of teaching by the Master. But we must not for a moment suppose that by 'the superior man' Confucius meant himself, or that he regarded his virtue as perfect virtue. He constantly disclaims such thoughts. He was truly humble. Take one instance. 'The Master said, In letters (*i.e.* literature) I am perhaps equal to other men, but the character of the superior man, carrying out in his conduct what he professes, is what I have not yet attained to. The sage and the man of perfect virtue, how dare I rank myself with them?'[2] In this abnegation of himself as an example, and renunciation of any claim to faultlessness, we have, of course, a strong contrast to the words of Christ: 'Which of you convinceth me of sin?' Confucius had no actual example to show of perfect virtue or the perfect man, but he was on the right track, and his ideal, though necessarily clothed in a somewhat strange garb, was a true and lofty ideal. There is no moral divergence between his aim and that of St. Paul. 'Till we all

[1] *Anal.* XIV. XXVI. [2] *Anal.* VII. XXXII.

attain unto the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, *unto a full-grown man*, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.'[1] Human nature is perfectible, and has been perfected in Christ; and the conception of the perfect man is a true contribution by Confucius to the preparation for the Gospel in the lands which have cherished his teaching.

Enough has been said as to the leading thoughts of the system, and we may proceed to consider the character of Confucius' morals in detail. It is thoroughly sound and good as far as it goes. Dr. Legge in his valuable Introduction to the *Analects* attempts some slight criticisms, but I cannot see that they are justified.

Let us take first an answer which has always excited admiration and surprise. 'Tsze-Kung asked, Is there one word which may serve as a rule of practice for all one's life? The Master said is not Reciprocity such a word? What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others.' This, indeed, is only the negative form of the Christian law (Matt. vii. 12), but the positive

[1] Eph. iv. 13 R.V.

form is implied though not actually stated in *The Doctrine of the Mean*, XIII. 4. The virtues which come out most distinctly in Confucius' teaching are humility, purity, sincerity, disinterestedness, freedom from personal ambition and desire of gain, wide benevolence, and courage. The praise of sincerity is chiefly to be found in *The Doctrine of the Mean*, but the extension there given to the idea of sincerity goes far beyond freedom from self-deception and hypocrisy, and seems not far removed from moral perfection in all respects. But in the narrower sense of single-mindedness, sincerity is insisted on continually, and for this end the importance of self-knowledge is pressed in quite a Socratic way. The evil of hypocrisy is constantly present to the Chinese sage as it was to the mind of Christ.

One or two sayings may now be quoted as examples of the incisive way in which he expressed his ethical teaching on the virtues enumerated above.

Courage. 'To see what is right and not to do it is want of courage.'[1] Disinterested-

[1] *Anal.* II. XXIV.

ness. 'When the superior man sees gain to be got, he thinks of righteousness.'[1] Freedom from ambition. 'The Master said, I will not be afflicted at men not knowing me; I will be afflicted that I do not know men.'[2] Perhaps the most striking of all the sayings is one which summed up his own practice in the training of his disciples, 'Can there be love which does not lead to strictness with its object.'[3]

This last quotation suggests some notice of Confucius' sayings on education, or rather on the acquirement of knowledge. Three passages which occur close together in the Second Book will illustrate the soundness of his view. 'If a man keeps cherishing his old knowledge so as to be continually acquiring new, he may be a teacher of others.' 'Learning without thought is labour lost, thought without learning is perilous.' 'Shall I teach you what knowledge is? When you know a thing to hold that you know it; and when you do not know a thing, to allow that you do not know it;—this is knowledge.'[4]

[1] Cp. *Anal.* IV. xvi.
[2] *Anal.* I. xvi.
[3] *Anal.* XIV. viii.
[4] *Anal.* II. xi., xv., xvii.

One important acknowledgement needs some comment. Confucius stated frankly that he did not profess to teach what was new. He was, to use his own words, 'a transmitter, not a maker, believing in and loving the ancients.'[1] Perhaps this was specially true of him, but it must always be the case with teachers of morality. The innate moral law has always found some expression in the thought of a people, before each individual teacher arises to give it system and fuller expression. What a great teacher whether human or divine has to do, is to take up what he finds, to correct, enlarge, and fulfil it. To deal adequately with this point so far as it affects Confucius would require us to investigate his relation to his predecessor (and in part contemporary) Lao-Tze,[2] the mystical teacher of Tao, *i.e.* the way, and the founder of Taoism, and not only his relation to Lao-Tze, but also to the earlier Chinese classics.

Now that we have concluded our survey of Confucius' work and system I should like

[1] *Anal.* VII. i.

[2] On Lao Tze, see detached note at the end of this lecture.

to draw your attention to a practical inference from the results attained by it. The results are the condition of Chinese society at the present day with its strange mixture of benevolence and cruelty, industry and fraud, domestic virtues and impurity. And the inference is the small value of an elevated system of ethics without religion, for of religion there is nothing in the *Analects* from beginning to end. Morality apart from religion is what is being commended to us at the present day for the education of our children so far as their school life is concerned, and the evidence given by China is deserving of our attention. I will conclude with a few words from Bishop Westcott's work already quoted, which will put the matter more clearly. 'The Chinese Empire has been at once the most lasting in the world, and the most unprogressive. It has been lasting because it was the resolute expression of faith in a supreme and beneficent order, as against the pessimism of Hinduism and Buddhism which sees in the world of sense, illusion and evil; and as against the endless conflict of popular Zoroastrianism. It has been unprogressive be-

cause Confucianism obscured the fact of sin, and substituted a morality for a theology, rules for a divine fellowship, obedience to a code for devotion to a living Lord, as many at the present day seem to believe that the Sermon on the Mount can take the place of the Risen Christ.' 'In China we see the results of a personal moral discipline ruled by the motive of self-regarding culture and not of self-sacrifice.'[1]

NOTE ON TAOISM.

The contrast between Confucianism and Taoism is at the outset as wide as possible. While Confucius insists at length and in detail on the practice of particular virtues, Lao Tze substitutes for them the incomprehensible Tao which not only includes them all, but appears to make them unnecessary. It seems as if Lao-Tze had in his mind another form of that problem which must occur to the Christian thinker, namely, how the ordinary conceptions of virtue are reconcileable with the future heavenly state, which by the absence of competing evil seems inevitably to rob them of their actuality; and that he (Lao-Tze) conceived of such a state not in the future, but as having existed in primitive times, and being capable of being restored. Some of the sayings of Lao-Tze

[1] Westcott, *Gospel of Life*, ch. v.

have been published in a cheap form in the series entitled 'Wisdom of the East,' but the reader should be warned that this so-called translation is something very different from a faithful rendering of the original text, which is summarised, combined, paraphrased and adapted with unjustifiable freedom.

LECTURE II.

GOTAMA.

We now pass from China to Hindustan, from the practical common-sense teacher, who would have nothing to say to metaphysics, and confined himself to the present life and its duties, and we find ourselves in a wholly different atmosphere, speculative to a degree that we can barely conceive, full of strange, unfamiliar ideas.

At about the same time that Confucius lived and taught in China, Gotama the Buddha lived and taught in Northern Hindustan. I speak of him as Gotama (though to a pious Buddhist this would appear irreverent), for Gotama was at least his family name, not Buddha for that is a title, 'the enlightened one.' And the title is not peculiar to him, for there have been, and will be, many other Buddhas, and one

of them who will arise 5000 years after Gotama will be Maitreya Buddha, the Buddha of Kindness.

It is unnecessary to dwell on Gotama's personal history, as it has been told over and over again.[1] A brief outline will be sufficient. He was born at Kapila-vastu, about 100 miles north-east of Benares. In his youth certain sights which he saw brought home to him a sense of the transitoriness of all earthly happiness, and begot in him the distrust of and detachment from external things of which we hear later. In his twenty-ninth year he left his home to devote himself to religion and philosophy. The resolution was taken at a strange time, at the birth of his only son. This was a tie to home which in a little while would become impossible for him to break. So we come to the pathetic legend of the Great Renunciation, in which he takes a last look at his sleeping wife and babe, and without a farewell goes out into the forest a homeless wanderer.

[1] The materials for his life are very various in date and character. Their contents are excellently summarised by Bishop Copleston in his *Buddhism: Primitive and Present*, ch. iv., and more fully by Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, chapters ii. and iii.

There he passes the next six years as an ascetic, but finds no peace. He abandons his ascetic practices in despair, and in consequence his companions forsake him. Then comes the day spent under the Bo tree (*i.e.* tree of enlightenment). There, by meditation, he arrives at perfect insight into the nature and cause of sorrow, and the way of destroying it. He discovers the 'Four Truths' which are the basis of the whole Buddhist system, and becomes the Buddha of the age. Then, when he clearly sees the nature of man and of his sorrows, and the way of victory, the question arises, 'Shall he attempt to show this way to others?' 'It will be useless, they will not understand me,' and for a moment he is tempted to be satisfied with his own salvation. But he decides otherwise, and sets out for Benares to find and convert the former companions of his ascetic life. I will quote from the *Mahâvagga*[1] the account of their conversion, as it is of central importance, omitting only some of the frequent repetitions characteristic of Buddhist literature:

'And the Blessed One, wandering from

[1] *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XIII., pp. 91-102.

place to place, came to Benares, to the deer-park Isipatana, to the place where the five Bhikkhus (his former companions) were. And the five Bhikkhus saw the Blessed One coming from afar; when they saw him they concerted with each other, saying, Friends here comes the Samana Gotama, who lives in abundance, who has given up his exertions, and who has turned to an abundant life. Let us not salute him; nor rise from our seats when he approaches; nor take his bowl and his robe from his hands. But let us put there a seat, and if he likes, let him sit down.

'But when the Blessed One gradually approached near unto those five Bhikkhus, they kept not their agreement. They went forth to meet the Blessed One; one took his bowl and his robe, another prepared a seat, a third one brought water for the washing of the feet, a footstool, and a towel. Now they addressed the Blessed One by his name, and with the appellation Friend.

'When they spoke to him thus, the Blessed One said, Do not address, O Bhikkhus, the Tathâgata by his name, and with the appellation Friend. The Tathâgata, O Bhikkhus, is the absolute, holy Sambuddha. Give ear, O

Bhikkhus, the immortal has been won by me; I will teach you; to you I preach the doctrine. If you walk in the way I show you, you will ere long have penetrated to the truth, having yourselves known it, and seen it face to face; and you will live in the possession of that highest goal of the holy life, for the sake of which noble youths fully give up the world, and go forth into the houseless state.

'When he had spoken thus, the five monks said to the Blessed One: By those observances, Friend Gotama, by those practices, by those austerities, you have not been able to obtain power surpassing that of men, nor the superiority of full and holy knowledge and insight. How will you now, living in abundance, having given up your exertions, having turned to an abundant life, be able to obtain these things?'

When they had spoken thus, the Blessed One said to the five Bhikkhus: 'The Tathâgata, O Bhikkhus, does not live in abundance, he has not given up exertion, nor turned to an abundant life.' (Then follows a repetition of what Gotama had previously said.)

Then said the Blessed One: 'Do you admit, O Bhikkhus, that I have never spoken to you

in this way before this day?' 'You have never spoken so, Lord.' And the Blessed One was able to convince the five Bhikkhus, and they again listened willingly to the Blessed One, they gave ear, and fixed their mind on the knowledge.

And the Blessed One said: 'There are two extremes which he who has given up the world ought to avoid. What are these? A life given to pleasures, devoted to pleasures and lusts: this is degrading, sensual, vulgar, ignoble, and profitless. And a life given to mortifications: this is painful, ignoble, and profitless. By avoiding these two extremes, the Tathâgata has gained the knowledge of the Middle Path which leads to insight and wisdom, which conduces to calm and knowledge, to the Sambodhi, to Nirvâna. This is the holy eightfold Path, namely, Right Belief, Right Aspiration, Right Speech, Right Conduct, Right Means of Livelihood, Right Endeavour, Right Memory, Right Meditation.[1]

[1] As Bishop Copleston has pointed out (*Buddhism*, p. 130), the Eightfold Path, though often mentioned, is nowhere worked out in any practical way. It is of infinitely less import than the Four Truths which follow it.

'This, O Bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth of suffering: Birth is suffering; decay is suffering; illness is suffering; death is suffering. Presence of objects we hate is suffering; separation from objects we love is suffering; not to obtain what we desire is suffering. Briefly, the fivefold clinging to existence is suffering.

'This, O Bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth of the Cause of suffering. Thirst, that leads to re-birth, accompanied by pleasure and lust, finding its delight here and there. (This thirst is threefold), namely, thirst for pleasure, thirst for existence, thirst for prosperity.

'This, O Bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of suffering; (it ceases with) the complete cessation of this Thirst—a cessation which consists in the absence of every passion—with the abandonment of this Thirst, with the doing away with it, with the deliverance from it, with the destruction of desire.

'This, O Bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth of the Path which leads to the cessation of suffering; that holy eightfold Path, that is to say, Right Belief, etc., etc. (as above).

'This Noble Truth of Suffering must be

understood. This Noble Truth of the cause of suffering (*i.e.* the Thirst which is the cause of suffering) must be abandoned. This Noble Truth of the cessation of suffering must be seen face to face. This Noble Truth of the Path which leads to the cessation of suffering must be realised.

'As long, O Bhikkhus, as I did not possess with perfect purity this true knowledge and insight into these four Noble Truths, I knew that I had not yet obtained the highest absolute Sambodhi . . . but when I possessed it (as above) I knew that I had obtained it. And this knowledge and insight arose in my mind, "The emancipation of my mind cannot be lost; this is my last birth; hence I shall not be born again."

'Thus the Blessed One spoke. The five Bhikkhus were delighted and rejoiced at the words of the Blessed One.'

Further discourses follow, and the Bhikkhus receive ordination. The section concludes with the words, 'At that time there were six Arahats (*i.e.* perfectly holy persons) in the world.'

Next we are told of successive conversions of Yasa and other men of position who join

the teacher, forsaking home and wealth. The narrative reminds us closely of the coming in of the early followers of St. Francis, Bernardo, Egidio and Silvestro. An incident which happens twice illustrates the attractive charm of the teacher. Twice those who meet Gotama say to him, 'Whence have you that bright serene countenance?' This again is a true Franciscan characteristic. So before long sixty members are gathered into the community, and when the number is complete, they are sent abroad in all directions to make converts. For Buddhism was from the first a Missionary Religion. The community increases rapidly. Gotama's fame is spread abroad. The King of Magadha receives him and is converted. Rules are laid for the guidance of the Society. Forty-five years of active ministry are closed with the last discourses contained in the *Book of the Great Decease*. This is one of the oldest portions of the vast Buddhist canon, and is said to have been composed within a hundred years of Gotama's death. It contains some legendary supernatural accretions, but on the whole probably represents actual facts. If all the long discourses included in it were

not uttered by Gotama at that time, they are most likely a correct representation of his teaching at other times, and they certainly have a simple beauty which speaks for their truth. There is much of the *Book of the Great Decease*, which is worth reading, but only a short passage can be quoted here, the last words of Gotama to his beloved disciple Ananda.[1]

Now the Blessed One addressed the venerable Ananda, and said: 'It may be, Ananda, that in some of you the thought may arise, "The word of the Master is ended, we have no teacher more!" But it is not thus, Ananda, that you should regard it. The truths, and the rules of the Order which I have set forth and laid down for you all, let them after I am gone be the Teacher to you.'

'When I am gone, Ananda, let the higher penalty be imposed on brother Khanna.' But what, Lord, is the higher penalty? Let Khanna say whatever he may like, Ananda, the brethren should neither speak to him, nor exhort him, nor admonish him.

Then the Blessed One addressed the

[1] *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xi. pp. 112-4.

brethren, and said: 'It may be, brethren, that there may be doubt or misgiving in the mind of some brother, as to the Buddha, or the truth, or the path, or the way. Enquire, brethren, freely. Do not have to reproach yourselves afterwards with the thought, "Our teacher was face to face with us, and we could not bring ourselves to enquire of the Blessed One when we were face to face with him."' And when he had thus spoken, the brethren were silent. And again the second and third time the Blessed One repeated the same words, and even the third time the brethren were silent. And the venerable Ananda said to the Blessed One: 'How wonderful a thing it is, Lord, and how marvellous! Verily I believe that in this whole assembly of the brethren, there is not one brother who has any doubt or misgiving as to the Buddha, or the truth, or the path, or the way.' 'It is out of the fulness of faith that thou hast spoken, Ananda. But, Ananda, the Tathâgata (*i.e.* Gotama) knows for certain that in this whole assembly there is not one brother who has any doubt or misgiving as to the Buddha, or the truth, or the path, or the way. For

even the most backward, Ananda, of all these five hundred brethren has become converted, and is no longer liable to be born in a state of suffering, and is assured of final salvation.'

Then the Blessed One addressed the brethren, and said: 'Behold now, brethren, I exhort you, saying, Decay is inherent in all component (*sic*) things. Work out your salvation with diligence. This was the last word of the Tathâgata.'

Having thus briefly considered the story of Gotama's life, we come to the consideration of his system. All systems of morality and all great teachers, however marked their originality may be, must be viewed in relation to what preceded them, and to what they found around them. Buddhism was at first distinctly a sect within Brahmanism, just as Christianity was at first a sect within Judaism. There were certain strong contrasts of pregnant importance; for instance, Gotama's disregard of caste and insistence on the 'way' being open to all, and, again, his rejection of all the miserable superstition and self-torture in the name of religion which filled a considerable place in Brahmanism.

He taught that sacrifices and penances were of no avail.

But belief in Brahman metaphysic and philosophy generally lies at the basis of Gotama's way of salvation. What, then, are the features of this belief which come out in Buddhism? They are three, very strange, yet on examination not so utterly unfamiliar as they seem at first sight, and, I fear, to some extent gaining ground in western thought.[1] They may be described under the heads of (1) Illusion, (2) Transmigration, (3) Pessimism.

(1) Illusion (Maya). The external world and all that is in it is an illusion, a deceit. There is no such thing. All that exists is reduced to the Eternal Unconscious, Impersonal Spirit, and Maya which overspreads it. 'It is by reason of association with illusion or ignorance that the Supreme Spirit enshrined in the Personal God, and the living spirit enshrined in the heart of man, believe in their own individuality, mistaking

[1] In strictness a distinction should here be drawn between the six different systems of philosophy which were prevalent. The Sankhya system appears to be more distinctly represented in Buddhism than the others.

it and the surrounding world for realities, just as a rope in a dark night might be mistaken for a snake. The moment that the spirit sets itself free from the power of Illusion or Ignorance, its identity and that of the whole phenomenal universe with the one impersonal Spirit (Brahmă) is re-established.'[1] The preceding quotation refers to the Vedantist system of philosophy alone, but it will be hardly necessary here to state the differences between it and other prevailing forms of thought.

(2) Transmigration. This belief included the transmigration of souls not only from one human body to another, but from men to gods, to beasts, birds, and reptiles, and even to inanimate objects, such as stones. It has been said that the dread of endlessly continued transmigration is the one haunting thought which colours the whole texture of Indian philosophy. It must be distinguished from metempsychosis pure and simple,[2] of which it is perhaps a development. This latter, strictly speaking, implies only rebirth of human souls in human bodies, and traces of it are found even in early Christian literature.

[1] Monier Williams, *Religious Thought in India*, p. 37.

[2] See Stewart's *Myths of Plato*, p. 302 *sqq*.

It has been suggested that what commended the idea was the sense of the anomalies of human conditions, so various as they are in respect of happiness and misery. These were explained as being retributive, the consequence, in fact, of the goodness or badness of previous lives.[1]

(3) Pessimism. This was dominant in Hindu thought, and no doubt the hard conditions of life had much to do with its dominance. Famine, pestilence, constant war, and tyrannical oppression all weighed heavily on the mass of the people. And, moreover, the two doctrines previously mentioned (Illusion and Transmigration) would go far to establish the third. Pessimism became in Buddhism an earnest creed, for earnestness was a characteristic of Gotama and his first followers. It has been truly said that 'in the East multitudes of men have earnestly striven to act upon their pessimism, while in the West no one has yet seriously tried to do so.'[2]

This, then, was the atmosphere in which Gotama was born and lived. Existence is an

[1] Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, p. 100.
[2] Flint, *Anti-Theistic Theories*, p. 332.

evil, an evil because it is full of suffering, and where it is not suffering its experiences are all an illusion, its apparent pleasures are vain deceits. And worse still, these conditions will not cease with death, for this life is only one of an endless chain of similar lives, all of them full of illusion and suffering, in which the soul may sink lower and lower throughout the ages. Therefore suicide is of no avail, that refuge of the pessimist is no refuge at all. How can a man be delivered from this misery? You see it is not deliverance from sin which is sought for, not from punishment, but simply from this terrible, interminable, automatic succession of existences, each of them the result of the previous one. We to whom the idea is utterly strange and incredible find it hard to realise the horror which it inspired.

Now it was from this that Gotama felt himself set free when he saw the Four Noble Truths. They have already been quoted, but they must be most carefully considered, as they are the very centre of primitive Buddhism. But, first, it will be necessary to state how far the Brahman doctrine of transmigration was modified in Gotama's

system, as otherwise the Four Truths will not be intelligible.

The ordinary doctrine supposed the reality of a permanent independent soul in man, migrating from one body to another. This belief is strongly modified in Buddhism. For it teaches that our supposed consciousness of self is a delusion. There is no real human personality. The names soul or self merely betoken an aggregate of faculties which breaks up at the death of the body. But there is a force by virtue of which these dissolved elements tend to recombine and again delude themselves with the imagination of a Self. This force is Karma.[1] It is the consequence of the desires indulged in the life just ended, and especially of the vain, foolish craving for existence, of the desire to live. Now this Karma is exceedingly difficult to define or explain; for the very good reason that it is a pure figment of the Buddhist imagination, invented to bridge over the constant breaches of continuity in the long chain of transmigration,

[1] For an attempt to rehabilitate Karma by giving it a different and much wider sense, see Carus, *Buddhism and its Christian Critics*, p. 131 ff.

which chain nevertheless has to be represented as continuous. The only way to neutralise the force of Karma is to resist all kinds of attraction to life and its pleasures and interests. Then after death there will be no recombination, and the otherwise interminable chain of existences will be finally broken.

Let us now return to the Four Noble Truths which have already been quoted word for word from the *Mahâvagga*. Briefly taken they amount to the following propositions. I will avail myself in some measure of Bishop Copleston's summary.[1]

(1) Pain and suffering are indisputably a universal fact in human life: pain is the inseparable condition of all existence.

(2) The cause of sorrow is the desire for *existence*. This is the deepest part of the Second Truth, for the subsidiary idea that the desire for pleasure leads to sorrow, is a truth not peculiar to Buddhism.

(3) The cessation of sorrow is effected by the cessation of desire. Here again, as in the Second Truth, the sensual desires are struck at, not for themselves only, but as

[1] Bishop Copleston, *Buddhism*, pp. 117-127.

one manifestation of the craving of the living being for a hold on things, that is to say for existence.

(4) Desire is eradicated by following the general course of conduct taught by the Buddha.

I do not think we can condemn too strongly the aims which the Four Noble Truths set before us. Whenever we are attracted by Buddhism, and there is much to attract us in Gotama's life and words, we should recall the character of his fundamental beliefs. Existence is an evil to be got rid of, and it is to be got rid of by the eradication of the primary desires of human nature.

What a view of human life we have here! How does it look to a young man just entering on the world? Consider the effect of such a conviction on your thoughts, purposes, and aspirations. Even the dry morality of Confucianism is noble by the side of such a philosophy of despair, such a miserable renunciation of all that we feel ourselves capable of doing.

It is not true that all existence is suffering, and so far as it is suffering, Christianity has

taught us to recognise its disciplinary value. 'It is,' says Dr. Illingworth, 'a simple fact that in our present sinful state, pain and sorrow are among the most powerful factors in the development of character.'[1] We are to meet suffering and overcome it, gaining from it what it teaches.

Then as to the eradication of desires. It is not true that there is anything in common between the Buddhist aim of eradicating all desires in order to get rid of existence, and the Christian aim of bringing desires into subjection and suppressing those developments of them which have become distinctly evil. This false analogy has been pressed in favour of Buddhism by the late Lafcadio Hearn, an Irish journalist converted to Buddhism, who had some success, from a literary point of view, in recommending his adopted faith to the English and American public. When he says that 'the dissolution of self is the object to which all our efforts should be turned,' and that it is for this disintegration that Christians as well as Buddhists perpetually pray, he shows an utter incapacity to understand the rudiments

[1] Illingworth's *Christian Character*, chapter iii.

of Christianity.[1] We believe that the Incarnation shows the way and gives the power to be renewed and perfected in all the proper attributes and characters of human nature. Not the eradication of desire, but its subjection and direction is what we need. It is capable of being conformed to the will of God and the likeness of Christ. It is true that Christianity has not always understood its own proper aim. In its reaction from the gross licence of the heathen world, it did aim at the suppression of human nature rather than its direction and subjection, and in the asceticism of the desert and the cloister, there is a point of contact with Buddhism to which I will afterwards return.

Let us now consider the practical effect of this Third Noble Truth concerning the destruction of suffering. It is to be effected by the eradication of all the desires which are awakened by contact with the outer world through the five senses or through memory. These desires are to be starved in every possible way.

It is at once evident that such a system

[1] *Kokokoro*, p. 246. Hearn settled in Tokyo as a lecturer in English at the University, married a Japanese, and died 1905.

is incompatible with the ordinary life of the world. It can only be realised in a community of celibates, entirely detached from home life and duties, and possessing no property of any kind. The foundation of such a community, consisting at first of monks only, and afterwards of monks and nuns, was accomplished by Gotama himself. We contrasted Confucius with Christ as having founded no society. We cannot so contrast Gotama. He founded a society, but it was not a universal society as the Christian Church is. There is the difference, and it is immense.

Though the elaborate rules of the Vinaya Pitaka (Discipline for the Order) cannot all be attributed to Gotama himself, they may probably on the whole represent his directions. As we read the concise legislation of the Vinaya Pitaka, we seem at times to have before us the rules of some early Christian monastic order. At another time the anecdotes and instances from the life of the Bhikkhus (monks) remind us closely of passages in the *Speculum perfectionis* describing the discipline of the first Franciscans.[1] Or again,

[1] Cp. *Mahâvagga*, i. 49, with *Speculum perfectionis*, cap. iii., the story of the novice who was dying of hunger.

take the scheme laid down for the Chapter meeting on Uposatha days. Various rules are recited, the transgression of which is a serious offence. Then the brethren are questioned in respect of them (the thirteen offences). I ask the venerable ones, 'Are you pure in this matter.' The question is three times repeated. Then follow the words: 'The venerable ones are pure herein. Therefore do they keep silence.'[1]

There are, moreover, many rules as to qualifications and disqualifications for the ordination by which monks were admitted to the community, illustrated by stories of unworthy candidates. The similarity might be developed in abundance of details, but enough has been said to emphasise it, and the question naturally follows, How is it to be accounted for? Probably not by any borrowing from the Buddhist system on the part of the founders of Christian monasticism, though, as we shall see, there was a possible channel for this. We must rather attribute it to the unity of human nature in India and Egypt, in Gaul and Italy, and to similar

[1] Cp. the account of the daily Chapter in a Norman monastery in Church's *Life of Anselm*, chap. iii.

tendencies suggesting similar rules under the shadow of very different faiths. But, as has been said, there was one great distinction, not indeed between Buddhist and Christian monasticism, but between Buddhism and the original conception of the Christian Church. Gotama's society was limited, its conditions were incompatible with ordinary life. For the householder there were separate conditions and doctrines, indeed one may even say a different religion. But the society which Christ founded was universal, there was no separate inner circle. As believers, St. Peter and St. Paul lived the same life, and held the same faith as their converts. The idea of the monastic as the 'religious' life grew up in the Church without any real foundation in the Gospels, though Christ's call to His disciples to forsake their worldly possessions for His sake could be interpreted to favour that view. Even by the end of the second century A.D. we have in Clement of Alexandria a description of the Two lives, the lower that of the ordinary Christian and the higher that of the true Gnostic, which in spite of serious difference corresponds in a marked way to the Buddhist distinction between

monk and householder.[1] The true Gnostic, like the Buddhist monk, attains detachment, indifference to the world, apathy, that is, the extinction of emotions. We cannot be sure that Clement was not influenced by Buddhist thought. We know that he had heard of the Buddha and his followers, for he mentions them (*Clem. Alex. Strom.*, I. xv.).

But there is so much in common between the Buddhist and the Stoic that the latter source may sufficiently account for Clement's teaching in this particular.

But to return from this digression. For the ordinary householder, as I have already said, there was a different code, a different religion. To him, and to him only, expectation was held out of heaven or hell. Nirvâna was nearly out of the question for him. His life was not one in which desires could be eradicated. But he might have a succession of births under favourable conditions if he observed the layman's morality, and so at last attain extinction.

So far, you will perhaps see, Gotama has been exhibited rather as a philosopher than

[1] 'Clement proclaims that the life of the ordinary believer, that is to say, of the great body of the Church, is a lower life.' Bigg's *Christian Platonists*, Lect. iii. p. 86 ff.

as a moral teacher. Yet such he was. Dr. Edward Caird has truly observed that, 'in the first instance at least, the intellectual and moral value of a movement of religious thought depends mainly, not on the goal to which it tends, but on the course which it takes in the endeavour to reach that goal.'[1] The goal to which Buddhism tended was a false one—personal extinction; but the course which primitive Buddhism took was morally in many respects a pure and lofty one. There was an honest attempt to get rid of the evils of the soul, such as the four ill conditions, lust, hatred, stupidity, fear; or such as the ten bonds, in which category, however, we find love of life on earth and desire of life in heaven ranged with pride, self-righteousness, and ignorance. Again, there was a profound moral truth contained in the doctrine of 'Karma,' namely, What a man sows that must he also reap. The doctrine of Karma went much beyond that as we have seen, but the conception which lay at the root of it, apart from its metaphysical development, is of supreme value. And the Buddhist conception of

[1] E. Caird, *Evolution of Religion*, vol. i. p. 362.

what is good sowing and what is bad, was upon the whole in thorough accordance with the best morality, as will appear from what follows. Prominent in Buddhist teaching on Right Conduct is a conception of Love fully as wide and as gracious as the 'charity' of 1 Cor. xiii. The great passage occurs in the Tevigga Sutta, where it forms the final instruction which closes the story of the conversion by Gotama of two young Brahmans. But it is found in other places in the Canon, and the translator adds a note that such meditations play a great part in later Buddhism, and occupy very much the place that prayer takes in Christianity. 'And he (*i.e.* the true disciple) lets his mind pervade one quarter of the world with thoughts of Love, and so the second, and so the third, and so the fourth. And thus the whole wide world, above, below, around, and everywhere, does he continue to pervade with heart of Love, far-reaching, grown great, and beyond measure. Just as a mighty trumpeter makes himself heard, and that without difficulty, in all the four directions, even so of all things that have shape or life, there is not one that he passes by, or leaves aside, but regards them

all with mind set free, and deep-set love. Verily this is the way to a state of union with Brahma'[1] (*Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xi. p. 201). Love, generosity, sacrifice, these are conceptions which are to be found in the Buddhist Canon, and not only in the New Testament. But it seems a fair criticism to say that the records of Buddhism seem to show that they were regarded rather as a becoming temper of mind than as a motive to strenuous action.

What, then, are we to say in conclusion as to the moral worth of Gotama's teaching as represented in the early Buddhist literature? We are limiting the question to primitive Buddhism only. The Buddhism of Tibet and Nepaul is polytheism with a sacrificial cult, and that of China and Japan is so mixed with other faiths that no estimate of it is possible. But even with this limitation the answer is too large to be summed up in a sentence or even in many sentences.

This, however, I think may safely be said, that thousands of lives have been better and

[1] It must be remembered that the idea of Brahma is not at all the same as that of God, and that union with Brahma could only be temporary, a temporary life as an angel in the Brahma heaven. Copleston's *Buddhism*, p. 217.

happier for the moral teaching of Gotama, notwithstanding the utterly mistaken goal to which that teaching was directed, namely, the extinction of existence.

On the other side, we must never forget that the whole system has one deep inherent fault, the same fault as Confucianism; it is not a religion in the proper sense of the word—that is to say, there is no God in it, no one above to whom human life is in relation, for whom and in whom it may be lived, for Gotama himself is only a holy memory; and Brahma is merely a temporary lord of the heavens, who has originally been a man and has since been re-born as a god. The Buddhist believer is told explicitly that he is not to look outside himself for help,[1] he is to be 'his own lamp and his own refuge.' Such words inevitably suggest a striking contrast. They recall to our minds the magnificent opening of the eighteenth Psalm, 'I will love thee, O Lord, my strength; the Lord is my strong rock, and my defence; my Saviour, my God, and my might in whom I will trust, my buckler, the horn also of my salvation and my refuge.'

[1] *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xi. p. 38.

LECTURE III.

SOCRATES.

We now pass from the East to the West, from China and Hindustan to Greece. It is still the fifth century B.C. with which we are concerned. In the latter half of this century Socrates was teaching at Athens.

In Socrates and his teaching we come much nearer to modern thought, and the reason is that all modern thought and culture springs from Greece. The stream of thought in China and Hindustan has flowed on till our own time, but has not in any appreciable degree influenced Western ideas. This is true, even if we bear in mind that Buddhist teaching was not unknown to the thinkers of Alexandria both Pagan and Christian.

I need hardly remind you that the history of Greek philosophy begins long before

Socrates. Already for a century and a half the mind of Greece had been occupied with profound questions as to life and death, matter and spirit, the finite and the infinite. But though Socrates was not the first philosopher, his age was a turning point in the history of thought. Philosophy before Socrates was simply and solely a philosophy of nature. But Socrates, instead of beginning by observing nature, begins by observing 'self,' that is to say, with ethics instead of physics.[1] There are other important differences between him and his predecessors, but for our present purpose, it is enough to say that he was the first moral philosopher, and first applied himself to questions of moral life and conduct, thereby giving a direction to all subsequent schools.

The first question which you will wish to have answered is, What do we know about the person, life, and character of this teacher? We saw in the case of the two others whom we have reviewed, that the teaching owed

[1] Zeller's *Socrates and Socratic Schools*, tr. Reichel, chap. iii. I do not mean to undervalue the influence of the Sophists, but that is a subject which could not be touched on in passing, or without much explanation.

much of its success to the personal character of the men, and so we shall find it to be in the present instance. It is inevitable that it should be so when moral teaching is concerned.

Before I try to depict the man, I must explain what the sources are from which our knowledge is derived. Socrates, like Confucius and Gotama, and, I may add, like our Lord Jesus Christ, left nothing written with his own hand. The same holds good of Epictetus. Our accounts of them all are derived from disciples, who treasured, collected, and expanded what they had heard. So in the case of Socrates we have two sources. We know him chiefly from his disciple Plato, who wrote Dialogues which profess to describe conversations between Socrates and those who followed him or came to see him. In these we have a living picture of Socrates, in the most graceful and finished prose ever written in any language. But Plato was himself a philosopher, and we can seldom feel sure that what we read was actually said by Socrates. Often it is undoubtedly Plato's own thought which he attributes to his master. Yet we may be sure that the *Dialogues* do faithfully repre-

sent Socrates' method of discussion, his manner, his humour, his clear-sightedness and simple love of truth. One of the series is not a dialogue. It is the defence made by Socrates on his trial, the *Apology of Socrates*, as it is called. It gives us the substance of what he then said, and therein shows us his own view of his mission. On this I shall depend largely in what I have to say, with the addition of another work which is a dialogue, the *Phaedo*, in which we have his last words and the story of his death.[1]

There is another source in which we see the philosopher through the eyes of quite a different man, Xenophon, a soldier and man of the world. He gives us in some respects a very different picture,[2] but confirms all that is essential as to the simple honesty, goodness, consistency, and courage of his master.

A very brief sketch must now be given of the life of Socrates. He was born in 469 B.C., and died at the age of 70 in 399 B.C. In early manhood he served as a soldier in

[1] See *Trial and Death of Socrates*, Golden Treasury Series.

[2] See Godley's *Socrates and Athenian Society*, ch. viii.

three campaigns, and distinguished himself by his courage and endurance. On two occasions he showed even greater courage in political life. Compelled by the law of Athens to take his turn in presiding over the Council, he refused to put to the vote an unjust sentence on the defeated admirals of the Athenian fleet, and withstood the threats and fury of the people. Again, when ordered by the party in power to arrest one of their enemies, a certain Leon, with a view to his execution; he refused to do so, and barely escaped death at their hands. With these exceptions his life was withdrawn from the political turmoil of his time, and may best be described as spent in conversation. But it was conversation with a definite purpose. Quite early in life he conceived that he had a mission to his fellow-citizens as an educator, not of children but of men, and especially of younger men. His work was to make them better, and how this was to be done, we shall see when we come to his method.

The only other incidents which are fully known to us, are his trial and death. He was accused of two things: (1) denying the

gods hitherto recognised, and introducing new ones; (2) corrupting the young. Trials in Athens took place before an assembly of 501 citizens with no judge to direct their finding. He was found guilty by 281 votes to 220, and then condemned to die in the usual manner, by a draught of hemlock to be administered in the prison.[1] How he met his end is told us with wonderful simplicity and beauty in the two last chapters of the *Phaedo*.

Our method throughout in endeavouring to appreciate these great teachers has been a method of comparison. Let us then compare Socrates with his two great predecessors Confucius and Gotama.

1. At the outset he stands in the strongest contrast with both of them, for he believes in a God, and his belief is no merely theoretical one. Confucius was silent on the matter, and gave only vague mysterious intimations of some influence of Heaven upon human affairs. Gotama went further in the negative direction. His silence meant that there was no personal, eternal, supreme God,

[1] For an account of the trial see *Trial and Death of Socrates* (Golden Treasury Series), pp. 60-67.

but only a multitude of Devas who in other stages of existence, had been the spirits of men. There was nothing above for man to look up to, his strength must be found in himself. But Socrates describes his mission to educate, much as a Christian teacher might do, as service to God. To this work he gives his life, neglecting all other employments, and so falls into poverty. He took from those whom he taught, not even an equivalent of the trifling payment which Confucius accepted. 'I cannot hold my peace, that would be to disobey God.' 'I am in very great poverty by reason of my service to God.' 'God alone is wise and knows all things.' 'His laws and commands are supreme and must be obeyed at all costs.' These and like sayings are scattered throughout the *Apology*. We feel that here we have a religious man in the true full sense of the word.

At the end of the Dialogue called *Phaedrus*, we have a prayer of Socrates, and though a brief, yet a beautiful one. As to the gods of the current Greek mythology, Zeus, Hera, Athene and the rest, he freely criticised them. The account given of them

did not satisfy his conception of deity. But he did not discard them. As Zeller says, we may recognise in Socrates that union of polytheism and monotheism which to a Greek was so easily conceivable by reducing the many gods of the popular faith to the rank of vassals of the One Supreme God.[1]

There was besides a very mysterious element in the consciousness of Socrates which helps to mark the distinctly religious character of his life and work. He often speaks of an inward sign or voice which had stopped him from doing things which he had intended to do. It had never been a positive voice urging to action, but always prohibitory, and it had been so far an unfailing guide. It came to him from God, and he had always obeyed it. Many explanations have been suggested, but there seems no reason why we should not accept the simple one that he did have a divine guidance vouchsafed to him. Thus, with a distinct acknowledgment on his part of a supreme God, and a recognition of personal guidance, we get what we could not have in the teaching of Confucius or Gotama, namely, place

[1] Zeller, *Socrates*, ch. viii.

for the notion of sin. There is a divine will and a divine ordering of the individual life to sin against, which Socrates for his part refuses to transgress. It is not, indeed, developed, rather it is stifled, by the mistake that knowledge and virtue are coincident, and that sin is ignorance.[1] Socrates did not either found or reform a religion, but he was a religious man in the strict sense, in which neither Confucius nor Gotama were religious. Yet on the basis of the teaching of the two latter, religions were ultimately built up, and not on that of Socrates. He had the higher vocation of preparing the Greek-speaking world for the Gospel. It was for this that, as Justin says, God gave law to the Jews and philosophy to the Greeks.

2. Let us now take another contrast between Socrates and his two predecessors. He died a martyr to the work which he had set himself. The terms of his accusation have already been quoted. But it is abundantly clear that it was his mission as

[1] Here the Greek poets were wiser than the philosophers. The conception of sin in the tragedians is clear and powerful. See the essay on Æschylus in Bishop Westcott's *Religious Thought in the West.*

a moral educator of his fellow-citizens which brought him to his death. It was this which had stirred up hatred. If he had consented to abandon it, his life would have been spared. Here, then, is the contrast. Confucius died disappointed indeed and neglected, but he had incurred no hatred. Gotama died almost worshipped by his followers, by a natural death, all the circumstances of which are related.

3. There is another contrast which opens up the special character of the method of Socrates. He refused to be called a Teacher. He had, he said, no positive knowledge to communicate; no 'noble truths.' He was an educator, if the distinction may be drawn, and there is a distinction. Certainly there are always many teachers who are not educators. Still less did he call himself a philosopher, though from him not one, but four great schools of philosophy took their rise. Confucius was a teacher, he professed it as his calling, and so was Gotama with his metaphysics, psychology, and practical rules of life. What, then, was Socrates? in what sense was he an educator? He found in his countrymen's minds a mass of confused

popular ideas about right and wrong, virtue and vice. He questioned them, or we may say cross-examined them, about these, and found that they could give no clear account of them. So he conceived it to be his mission to make men feel and acknowledge their ignorance on moral matters, as the first step towards making way for truer views, and so ultimately raising and purifying conduct and life. He went about the market-place, the baths, and the temples asking those whom he met, what is piety, what is courage, what is justice, and so forth. His object was to make men feel their moral ignorance, and there was special occasion for this in the existence at that time of a class of teachers named Sophists (*lit.* those who make men wise), who flattered the ignorance of their pupils. All that they did was to formulate and give colour to popular ideas. The relation of Socrates to the Sophists, or rather to the worser class of them, corresponds in some degree to the relation of Christ to the Scribes and Pharisees.[1] Thus it is that we

[1] Yet it is true that the opposition between Socrates and the Sophists may be exaggerated. There were good men among them, and so there were among the Scribes and Pharisees.

find Socrates represented in the Dialogues of Plato, cross-examining those who resort to him, sometimes convincing them of their ignorance, sometimes infuriating them or putting them to flight. This is what is called the dialectic method characterised by question and answer. The catechetic method which belongs to the teacher properly so-called is also by question and answer, but inasmuch as it aims at impressing teaching and not at eliciting the thoughts of the pupil, it is in strong contrast with dialectic. Socrates does not profess to know anything himself, but only to show others that they know nothing. So he constantly employs irony. He, forsooth, is the dullest of the company, hopes that he is going to learn a great deal from his interlocutors, and pretends to be sadly disappointed. One saying sums up the reason for adopting this method: 'A life which is not strictly questioned is not worth living.'[1] The real bar to a better life, so he held, was ignorance, and especially when ignorance supposes itself to be knowledge.[2] We are reminded of Gotama and the abolition of

[1] ὁ δὲ ἀνεξέταστος βιὸς οὐ βιωτὸς ἀνθρώπῳ (*Apol.* xxix.).

[2] Cp. Lect. i. p. 22.

ignorance which was so prominent in his system. But the resemblance is superficial. The ignorance in that case was a wholly different matter. It was ignorance of the Hindu metaphysic as to the One and the Many, ignorance as to the impermanence and unreality of the external world, ignorance of the cause of suffering and the Four Noble Truths, whereas the Socratic ignorance was ignorance as to the nature of true morality in its various departments. Different, again, is the Christian conception of ignorance, as ignorance of God, His character, and His will for us as revealed in His Son. We could hardly have a better instance of the caution needed in tracing similarities between distant phases of thought.

Here in this treatment of ignorance we come upon the fundamental mistake of the Socratic morals. Socrates held that knowledge and virtue were convertible. We have Aristotle's testimony, who says 'he (Socrates) thought all the virtues were sciences (ἐπιστήμας), so that it was one and the same thing to know righteousness and to be righteous.'[1] If a man only knows what is right, he will do it. All

[1] *Ar. Eth. Eud.* I. v. Cp. Zeller, *Socrates* (Tr.), p. 118.

men wish for what is good, only they do not know what it is. That was his account of the matter, whereas we are very well aware that a man may know perfectly well what is best for him to do, and yet be so carried away by his lower nature that he fails to do it. You will ask, How did a man of such genius and such deep acquaintance with human nature fall into such a mistake? The question is easily answered. It was because he himself had an amazing self-control and an iron will. He credited other men with having the same endowments, or at least he thought they were potentially within reach of all human nature and could be developed by training. This was why he had no difficulty in thinking of vice as ignorance and virtue as knowledge. This reference to his personal character suggests the addition of something further on that head taken from the testimony of his disciples. 'No one ever heard or saw anything wicked in Socrates; he was so pious that he did nothing without consulting the gods, so just that he never injured anyone in the slightest degree, so self-controlled that he never preferred pleasure to right, so wise that in judging of good and evil he was never

at fault.'[1] Or, again, let us hear what Plato puts into the mouth of the profligate Alcibiades: 'No one would think I had any shame in me, but I am ashamed in the presence of Socrates.'[2]

4. We may finish our comparison of Socrates with his two predecessors by consideration of the societies which they severally left behind them as the result of their work. In this respect Confucius and Socrates stand together in distinction from Gotama. He founded a monastic order with strict rules and close coherence which has numbered millions of members, and in many variations of form abides to-day. Confucius and Socrates merely collected disciples, or rather allowed themselves to become the centre of a band. Neither of them endeavoured to establish any permanent link between their followers. In both cases there seem to have been concentric circles, but in Socrates' case even the inmost were bound together not so much by community of philosophic doctrine as by common admiration for their master's intellect and character. Neither the one nor the other touched 'the multitude' in any direct way.

[1] Xen. *Mem.* I. i., IV. viii., xi. [2] Plat. *Sympos.* 216.

We never hear in their case of 'the multitude' surrounding and pressing upon them, nor of 'all the people very attentive to hear' them.

In these last words we have come incidentally on a point of contrast between Socrates and Christ. Let us now pursue that comparison further. We shall, in the course of it, observe points of strong resemblance as well as points of vital difference. Let us take first the points of resemblance.

1. Socrates like Christ concerned himself with conduct, with man in his relation to his fellowmen. He, probably, did not concern himself with anything else, notwithstanding the impression to the contrary which one gains from the dialogues of Plato. In Socrates' case this limitation arose from scepticism. Knowledge of any thing else was, be believed, out of the question. To seek to know things in heaven and earth was to his mind a delusion drawing us away from what we can in some measure really know, that is, ourselves. This is very like the attitude of the author of Job (Job xxviii. 12-28), where the only attainable wisdom for man is the fear of the Lord, that is, practical virtue. Of course the difference

even on this point between Socrates and Christ is much deeper than the resemblance, but there is a resemblance.

2. Another point of likeness is that both, on their trial, disclaim esoteric teaching. What they had to say was for all who would hear them. 'I have spoken openly to the world—in secret spake I nothing' (John xviii. 20). 'If any man asserts that he ever learnt or heard anything from me in private, which every one else did not hear as well as he, be sure that he does not speak the truth' (*Apol.* xxi.).

3. We have already noticed that Socrates had a strong consistent body of opponents in the Sophists, as Christ had in the Pharisees. We may add that Christ's description of his opponents as seeking glory of men (John v. 44) coincides with the character of the Sophists. And Plato's representation of much of Socrates' teaching as having been given in controversy with them (*e.g.* Protagoras, Gorgias) is parallel to the representation of Christ's teaching in St. John, as called out by conflict with the Pharisees.

4. Both Socrates and Christ abstain from touching the politics of their day. Socrates

in the *Apology* gives his reason for this. His views of right and wrong would at once have brought him into such antagonism with the ruling powers that his mission could not have been fulfilled. His life would have been cut short at once, and his work would not have been done. We see, of course, the same refusal on our Lord's part to take political action or to express political opinion, and we recognise the same motive as part at least of the reason for the course which he took.

5. We now come to the most obvious point of resemblance. Both suffered as martyrs on account of their teaching. Socrates down to the very last moment might have escaped the penalty of death if he had been willing to abstain from teaching. It was Christ's teaching which brought upon him the hatred of the Pharisees and excited the fears of the Sadducees. In Socrates' case the political alarm, both of oligarchs and democrats at the indirect effect of his non-political teaching, was really the instigating cause of the accusation and the sentence. His higher morality was a danger to the one party and to the other. And, moreover, in both cases,

one who came to raise and purify religion was put to death on professedly religious grounds. Of one it was said that he was an atheist and corrupted the youth; of the other, that he blasphemed God and perverted the people.

6. Socrates was not an ascetic. He lived hardly, and said that 'to want nothing is divine, to want as little as possible is the nearest approach to the divine.' He lived in poverty, but he was not unsocial like some of those who drew their inspiration from him, Cynics and Stoics. He took part in the feasts and diversions of his friends and disciples, nay, if we can trust Plato's account of him, he went further in this direction than strictness can approve. But setting this aside, we are reminded of the simple poverty, yet free from asceticism, which marked the life of the Son of Man. He came, as He Himself said, eating and drinking, and was found at weddings and feasts.[1]

We may now leave the resemblance and notice the vital contrasts between the human and the divine Master. Here I can refer you to Seeley's *Ecce Homo*, ch. ix., where

[1] Cp. Harnack's *What is Christianity?* ch. v. (1).

some of these are worked out with much distinctness, though the author's conception of Christ as merely human makes him fail to do them complete justice.

1. There is not in Christ's teaching any trace of the mistake that Socrates made, in representing ignorance as the sole cause of vice, and knowledge as a guarantee of virtue. One apparent exception, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do,' is to be explained as referring not to the general ignorance which, according to Socrates, is to be attributed to all evil doers, but to the ignorance both of Romans and Jews with regard to the Person with whom they were dealing, and the awful criminality of their act.

2. There is in Socrates' discourses an uncertain sound as to the nature of the true good of man, both as to what is to be included and what is to be excluded.

And this results in a want of definiteness and decision as to the evil of some constituents of heathen life. The morality of purity for instance is not severely laid down, and Socrates himself, if Plato may be trusted, goes near condoning one of the worst forms of Greek vice.

3. Socrates founded no society. How could he, for what was there in his teaching to build a society upon? A society must be built upon faith in a person (Matt. xvi. 18), or at least in a system of doctrines. Socrates, as we shall see, utterly disclaimed any personal authority, and taught no system of doctrine. What he did was merely to question and examine existing moral standards so as to set men on the search for something better.

4. Socrates left his teaching in the hands of others to be understood or misunderstood, as might happen, and so to be developed into what he never would have approved. Four quite different schools of philosophy arose from the impulse which he had given. Plato who was nearest to him attributes to Socrates his own metaphysics. I am, of course, aware that some will say that we have here a parallel and not a contrast with the history of the Gospel. But we at least believe that Christ promised and gave His Spirit to guide those who were entrusted with the work of unfolding His life and words and developing their meaning. If forms of Christianity arose, such as Gnosticism, which

were not according to Christ's own teaching, the main stream of doctrine and belief in the Catholic Church continued on the whole to flow clear and pure.

5. Lastly, and this is by far the most important difference, Socrates appealed to the reason, to the intellect of his hearers, wishing his own authority to count for nothing. He professed, as I have said before, to be the most ignorant person in the company. On the other hand, Christ does not address Himself to the intellect by argument or dialectic, but claims and speaks with authority as sent from God. He never depreciates Himself.[1] All who hear Him recognise His tone of authority as a new and unique characteristic. He claims obedience to His doctrine, which Socrates never did, and not merely to His doctrine but to His person. He asks primarily for affection, but for affection manifested in obedience.

Now let us very briefly sum up the general result of these three lectures. It is, I think,

[1] His assertion that His teaching is not His own, but His that sent Him (John vii. 16), and similar passages, are of course the very opposite of self-depreciation, being a claim of essential unity with the Father.

this, that the difference between Christ and other moral teachers lies not so much in the character and extent of His moral teaching as in the way in which it is presented and the purposes which it is to serve. The moral teaching is in many respects the same in the four great instances which we have been considering, though a want of completeness and serious deficiencies may be noted in each of the three earlier systems. It is, I think, a mistake to claim for Christian Ethics an entirely unique character as regards their contents. The distinctness lies much more in the way in which the morality is presented.[1] The ultimate authority for conduct in the Socratic teaching is the educated reason of the philosopher. But the ultimate authority for it in the Christian system is the revelation of God in the teaching and example of His Son. This revelation, indeed, appeals to the moral sense in man which is enlightened from the same source, from the eternal Word. But it is the voice of God, the voice of a Saviour; there is its authority, there is its universality, there is its persuasive power.

[1] This is just what is sacrificed when it is attempted to teach Christian ethics without Christian doctrine.

SECOND SERIES.

LECTURE I.

EPICTETUS.

We have already considered the work of three great moral teachers belonging to one and the same century, the fifth before Christ. They represent wholly distinct divisions of the human race, and are entirely independent of each other To-day we begin a review of a fourth, not independent but deriving impulse from the last of the three already considered, namely, from Socrates. Socrates is ever before the mind of Epictetus as hero and type. In the case of the first three the teacher himself was the type. It was not so with Epictetus; it is to Socrates or to Diogenes that he refers. Yet in some respects Epictetus' view of philosophy and life differs from that of Socrates, and advances beyond him. Again, Epictetus

represents another people, the Roman. He spoke in Greek, but he represents Roman thought. Though by birth a Phrygian, he had his education from a Roman teacher, Musonius Rufus. Roman Stoicism was, indeed, originally derived from Greek thought, but it took a form of its own, a form corresponding to its circumstances of time and place. It was developed in the first days of the Roman Empire, under a despotism often sombre and cruel, the despotism of the early Caesars, when no man's life was safe, certainly no man's life who loved liberty and ventured to own his love for it. This condition of things brought out the innate courage and nobility of the distinctively Roman character. It could not crush them—at least, it could not in the best spirits and the bravest men. Roman Stoicism was an apt protest of inward liberty against tyranny. 'You can torture and kill me, but you cannot conquer my will.'

There is another difference between Epictetus and his three predecessors, which at first sight might seem an important one, but does not really affect the character of his teaching. The other three taught before

Christ came. Epictetus belongs to the latter years of the first century after Christ. The many remarkable coincidences, which we shall notice hereafter, between Stoic and Christian teaching led quite early to a belief in the Church that the Roman Stoics were indebted to St. Paul. This belief suggested the composition of a spurious correspondence between St. Paul and his contemporary, L. Annaeus Seneca, one of the principal representatives of Roman Stoicism. The history of these letters is briefly examined by Bishop Lightfoot at the end of the Dissertation on St. Paul and Seneca which is appended to his Commentary on Philippians. He without hesitation pronounces them to be spurious, and that is the verdict of all scholars.

There is no sufficient reason to suppose that St. Paul's teaching had influenced Epictetus or his predecessors in the school. In the first place (1) the ethical principles form an integral part of their whole philosophic system, and (2) their system is, moreover, in close connexion with that of their philosophical predecessors.[1]

Secondly, there is much to show that the

[1] Hatch, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 140.

influence was in the reverse direction, namely, from Stoicism upon St. Paul. We cannot doubt that St. Paul, a native of Tarsus, who, besides his early years, had certainly in later life passed seven years in that city, must have been familiar with the school of philosophy for which it was famous. Tarsus was a Greek University, and at least six well-known Stoic teachers were men of Tarsus. Further, it is clear from Epictetus' one contemptuous notice of the Christians that he was under no conscious obligations to them. I will paraphrase his words. He is speaking of the fear of tyrants and of their executioners. 'It is possible,' he says, 'for a man to come to regard them without fear, through madness which prevents him knowing what they and their swords mean; and the Galileans (so he names the Christians) have acquired this stolid indifference through habit,' that is, I suppose, by constant exposure to danger. That is how he interpreted the martyr's courage. He could not penetrate to its secret. He contrasts with this 'habit' the courage of the Stoic, who has learned by reason and demonstration that the tyrant can only touch his body and his possessions,

but not his will. It is the same blind ignorance of the Christian spirit as that which we find later in the Meditations of M. Aurelius, who speaks of the readiness of Christians to meet death as being 'mere obstinacy,' and contrasts with this the readiness of the Stoic who should meet it with calculation, with dignity, and no tragic show. This is that emperor by whose 'bigotry or connivance the Christians suffered more widely and cruelly than at any other epoch in the first century and a half of their existence.'[1]

We may safely affirm that the Stoics had learnt nothing from the Christian writers or the Christian preachers. As yet, the Gospel was making its way at a lower level than that of the aristocratic society which listened to the Stoics. It was coming up from below.

Having now set aside the fiction of Christian influence, let us consider the actual genealogy of Stoicism. I do not think that any apology is needed for dwelling somewhat in detail in this place on the history of a school of philosophy. If we are to understand the presentation of the gospel to the Greek-

[1] Lightfoot, *Philippians*[2], p. 315. See also his *Apostolic Fathers*, vol. i. p. 510.

speaking world in the epistles of St. Paul, we need to know something of the development of Greek ethical thought and of the preparation which, under God, philosophy had already made for the fulfilment of the divine purpose. M. Martha, in the preface to *Les Moralistes sous l'Empire Romain*, has said with truth, 'If Christianity had been offered to the world some centuries earlier, it would not have been understood.' The course of thought which did make it intelligible and acceptable cannot be without interest to thoughtful Christians, and cannot be regarded as a subject unsuited to this Cathedral church.

You may remember that when speaking of Socrates, we noticed that four different schools of philosophy arose from his teaching, the Megarian, the Platonic, the Cyrenaic, and the Cynic. With the two first we need not concern ourselves here, except to say that the Platonic philosophy in the person of Plutarch will meet us again as the active rival and critic of Stoicism. Thus we turn to the second pair, the Cyrenaics and the Cynics who occupied themselves primarily with moral philosophy, that is, with the philosophy of conduct. These two schools

appear before us in the first century under new names,[1] as Epicureans and Stoics. You will remember that it is the representatives of these two schools who manifest interest in the new teaching which St. Paul brings to Athens: 'Certain of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him.' Though Epicurus and Zeno are severally regarded as the founders of Epicureanism and Stoicism, yet they distinctly reproduce the characteristics of the two preceding schools, the Cyrenaic and the Cynic.[2] Indeed Cynic not Stoic is the name which Epictetus uses when he describes his ideal teacher of morality, and he implies by his use of the term Stoic that he regards the name as somewhat discredited by the inconsistencies of those who claimed it (II. xix. and III. vii.). For us, on the contrary, it is the name Cynic which has been discredited. Only the eccentricities and defiance of decency which marked the earlier Cynics have been

[1] While it is strictly true that Stoicism is to be traced through the Cynic school to the impulse given by Socrates, yet its debt to Heracleitus as regards Physics, and consequently as to the basis of its ethics, is equally great.

[2] There was also a strictly Cynic school in the first century A.D. represented by Demetrius, on which see Ritter and Preller[8], 572a.

remembered. Their contempt of the usages of society and of the mass of mankind have made their name synonymous with that contempt in whatever guise it has manifested itself. But Cynicism in the mouth of Epictetus had no such significance. In his own way he believed intensely in human nature and its perfectibility. He was far from being a Cynic in the modern sense.

I must at the risk of tediousness endeavour to trace the genealogy of Roman Stoicism from its Greek sources. The attempt will at least remind you that this was no transitory phase of ethical thought, but held the field in the best intellectual circles of Greece and Rome for six hundred years. Antisthenes, the first Cynic, was a disciple of Socrates, and the story of his cloak may help us to remember this. In his eagerness to show his contempt for what the world thinks of outward appearances, he turned his ragged cloak so as to show the hole in it. Socrates welcomed him with the words, 'I see your vanity through the hole in your cloak.' Diogenes, whose tub and interview with Alexander the Great have made his name familiar to all, was a disciple of

Antisthenes, and from Diogenes the Cynic succession passed through Crates to Zeno, who flourished in the fourth century B.C. Under him Cynicism took a new name and a wider scope, though, as I have already said, the old name was preferred by Epictetus. This new name marked the influence of Zeno, and was taken from the Stoa or colonnade at Athens in which he taught. Zeno was succeeded in his leadership by Cleanthes in the third century B.C., who earned his living by drawing water by night for the gardens round Athens that he might listen to Zeno by day. Here again we touch the New Testament, for Cleanthes is one of the two poets whom St. Paul quotes in his address at Athens, 'For we are also His offspring, as certain even of your own poets have said' (Acts xvii. 28). The poem of Cleanthes in question is a hymn to Zeus, a sort of Stoic creed, which should be read by all who wish to understand Stoic thought.[1] Besides this hymn Cleanthes wrote other poems of which fragments only survive. One of these in

[1] It will be found translated both in Rolleston's *Sayings of Epictetus* and in *Golden Sayings of Epictetus*, App. C. The other poet who uses the same phrase is Aratus.

whole or in part is four times referred to by Epictetus, and Arrian gives the whole passage at the end of the *Manual* which he put together from his notes of Epictetus' *Discourses*.

> 'Lead me, O Zeus, and Thou, O Destiny,
> The way that I am bid by you to go.'
> 'To follow I am ready. If I choose not
> I make myself a wretch, and still must follow.'

We shall see by and by that these lines express exactly the submission which was the Stoic attitude towards the course of Nature.

The next great name in the chain, Chrysippus, illustrates what has already been said of the connexion of Stoicism with the birthplace of St. Paul. The father of Chrysippus was a man of Tarsus, and he himself was sometimes called a Tarsian. Passing over another Stoic of Tarsus, Antipater, we come to Panaetius, in whose person the Stoic philosophy obtained a footing in Rome in the second century B.C., and thus our interest is transferred thither. Henceforward it is Roman Stoicism with which we have to deal, although with the exception of the Spaniard, Seneca, these Roman Stoics wrote in Greek, the acknowledged medium of philosophical discourse. Passing over Seneca,

to whom we shall shortly return, we come to Musonius Rufus, who was in his day a famous teacher of Stoicism.[1] We know him only by fragmentary quotations, and his interest for us lies in this, that Epictetus was his pupil. The latter frequently quotes his sayings by name (calling him Rufus), and sometimes without giving his name, though we are enabled to recognise the words as those of Rufus by the fact that another author (Stobaeus) quotes them as his. The most characteristic reminiscence of Rufus which Epictetus gives us is the following passage. Rufus used to say to his pupils, 'If you have leisure to praise me, I am speaking to no purpose. Accordingly, he used to speak in such a way, that every one of us sitting there, supposed that some one had accused him to Rufus, so precisely did he touch on what we were doing, and place before our eyes each man's faults' *Diss.* III. xxiii.

[1] An interesting passage in Stobaeus (*Flor.* 56, 18) represents Musonius as urging the fitness of rural labour for the disciples of a philosopher. The farm is a better place for such instruction than the city or the school. Ruskin and his road makers would have met with his approval.

Carry the succession one link further from Epictetus onward and we come to the Emperor, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, who tells us himself how he owed to his friend Rusticus his knowledge of the *Discourses of Epictetus.*

We thus see that the history of Stoicism divides itself into two periods, in the former of which its centre was in Greece and Asia Minor, and in the latter at Rome. There as I have said already the conditions of life at Rome caused it to assume a special form.[1] Roman Stoicism has its own character. Of this phase there are three representatives who have left us memorials: Seneca, Epictetus, M. Aurelius.

The question will naturally occur, why should Epictetus be selected for our consideration rather than either of the other two, who have left writings under their own hands, instead of mere reports of their talk, such as Arrian has preserved for us in the case of Epictetus. There is, however, sufficient reason.

First of all, Epictetus is the strictest and

[1] Martha, *Moralistes sous l'Empire Romain*, *I. passim*, and *Golden Sayings*, p. xii.

most consistent of the three, and intellectually he is superior to M. Aurelius if not to Seneca. At the same time we must remember that his doctrine in the main is not his, but that of the school, and the same holds good of the other two. Throughout these lectures it must be borne in mind that when teaching is attributed to Epictetus nothing is implied as to its originality. But he presents it in its simplest form unmixed with the Platonism which qualifies it in Seneca. It is Platonism which makes Seneca so inconsistent,[1] and leads him at times to dwell on the hope of a future life (*Epp.* XXVI., CII.) which elsewhere he has denied. As M. Martha has said what Seneca lacks is 'authority,' the authority which belongs to the man who lives the life which he preaches,[2] and this authority Epictetus had.

The Emperor Marcus on the other hand adds nothing of importance to the moral teaching of Epictetus. Above all he is not primarily a teacher of others, and so does not come

[1] See an admirable passage in Dill's *Roman Society*, p. 514. Dill, Bk. III. c. i., justifies a much more favourable view of Seneca than has hitherto been taken.

[2] Martha, *Moralistes sous l'Empire Romain*, p. 156 f.

under our original programme of study. His twelve Books are meant for himself, as their title says—they are his meditations put down to help himself to live a good life. They are of the nature of a supplement to the *Discourses of Epictetus*. In the latter we hear the teacher inquiring, insisting, explaining, illustrating, persuading. In the *Meditations* we read the result of this teaching in the inward thought and life of an honest and modest disciple. The contrast which Dean Farrar draws in his *Seekers after God*, is as true as it is epigrammatic. 'Freedom is the master thought of Epictetus the slave; and self-government that of Marcus the Emperor.' Their different conditions gave emphasis to different aspects of the Stoic system. Yet who can doubt which is the more cheerful and which the more sad, the slave or the Emperor. Marcus Aurelius, as M. Martha has said, has the sadness of Pascal and the sweetness of Fenelon. But there is nothing of melancholy in the tone of Epictetus. It is strong, hopeful, and courageous.

To conclude this lecture we must glance at the few facts known as to the life of

Epictetus, and the person to whom we are indebted for the preservation of his *Discourses.*

Epictetus was a native of Hierapolis in Phrygia, one of three cities in the valley of the Lycus known to us in the New Testament (Col. iv. 13) as early homes of the Christian faith. The lower road from the interior to Ephesus ran along the Lycus valley, in which not far from each other were Laodicea, Colossae, and Hierapolis. Though none of these had been visited by St. Paul when he wrote the Epistle to the Colossians, yet we can gather from that Epistle that a church existed in each of them. However, we have already seen that Epictetus admitted no sympathy with the Christians, and probably knew little of their inner teaching. How and at what age he passed from Phrygia to Rome, and became a slave in the household of Epaphroditus, Nero's freedman, is quite unknown to us. It was as the slave of Epaphroditus that he was sent to the lectures of Musonius Rufus. Slavery in Italy under the Empire was quite unlike slavery in other lands and at other times, including as it did, conditions of much

liberty and honourable employment for some, along with conditions of great misery and unremitting toil for others. In many Roman households there was a career open to ability and honesty even for a slave. So Epictetus was educated at his master's expense, showed his intellectual power, was set free, and himself became a teacher. He continued to teach in Rome till the Emperor Domitian commanded all philosophers to leave Italy, fearing the influence of Stoicism as encouraging resistance to his cruel despotism, much as Russian autocracy dreads the influence of University studies.

Epictetus crossed the Adriatic to Nicopolis (city of victory) on the coast of Epirus founded by Augustus in memory of his victory over Antony in the battle of Actium. It is probable that Nicopolis was the place from whence St. Paul fifteen years before this, was carried to Rome for his second trial which ended in his martyrdom. At least this is suggested by his intention to winter there (Tit. iii. 12). At Nicopolis Epictetus was unmolested. Men gathered thither from all parts to hear, to follow, and to love their teacher. We have an illustration of

this in the account of one of them, who complained of being ill, and wished to go home. 'My mother will not be here to hold my head when I am ill.' 'Go to your mother, for you are a fit person to have your head held when you are ill.' *Diss.* III. v.

Nothing more is known of Epictetus' personal history. As we shall hereafter compare his teaching with that of Christ, we shall do well to notice here that there is an immense difference for future influence between a teacher whose words alone are preserved without any life history, and one whose words are set in the framework of a full record of what he was and what he did.

If Epictetus ever wrote anything with his own hand, it has perished, and the *Discourses* are notes of his conversations and informal lectures, taken down, perhaps in shorthand, by his pupil Arrian. Arrian is best known as the historian of Alexander the Great. But we owe him quite as much for his presentation of Epictetus. You may remember that I said that we are indebted for our knowledge of Socrates to two very different men, Plato and Xenophon, the latter

not a philosopher, but a soldier and man of affairs. Now Arrian, a distinguished soldier and administrator, aimed at being to Epictetus exactly what Xenophon had been to Socrates. Xenophon was his model both in this and in his other literary work. His picture of his master is no ideal description coloured by his own subjective impressions, like Plato's Socrates, but a faithful reproduction. The disclaimer in Arrian's own preface of any literary share in the contents of the book shows that Plato is in his mind. Plato is 'the other man' (the undefined τις) who had done similar work in a very different way. The notes which Arrian had taken were meant for his own use, but, so we may suppose, were lent about by him till at last they became public, so that he felt constrained to publish them formally with the preface which I will now read from Long's translation, with some corrections and paraphrases. 'I neither composed these discourses of Epictetus in the way in which another man might compose works of the kind, nor did I publish them myself, for they were no compositions of mine. But whatever I heard him say, the same I attempted to write down in

his own words as nearly as possible, for the purpose of preserving them for memorials to myself afterwards of the thought and free speech of Epictetus. Accordingly, the *Discourses* are naturally such as a man would address to another without preparation, not such as a man would write with a view of others reading them. Now, being such, I do not know how they fell into the hands of the public without either my consent or my knowledge. But it concerns me little if I shall be considered as wanting in literary skill, and it concerns Epictetus not at all if any man shall despise his words; for at the time when he uttered them, it was plain that he had no other purpose than to move the minds of his hearers to the best things. If, indeed, these *Discourses* should produce this effect, they will have, I think, the result which the words of philosophers ought to have. But if they shall not, let those who meet with them know that when Epictetus delivered them the hearer could not help being affected in the way that Epictetus wished him to be. But if the *Discourses* themselves by themselves do not effect this result, it may be that it is my fault,

or it may be that it cannot be helped.[1] Farewell.'

As we are throughout bearing in mind the comparison of Epictetus with a greater teacher, we shall do well to read with the above another preface, much shorter, and of an earlier date, but of equal interest—I mean Luke i. 1-4. The earlier Gospels were probably at first like Arrian's notes, memorials (ὑπομνήματα) to preserve 'the mind and speech' of the Saviour; but St. Luke's object is different, and will come out clearly by the contrast.

[1] *I.e.* that when written they must lose the effect they had when spoken.

LECTURE II.

EPICTETUS.

It is, as we have seen, to Arrian that we owe our materials for the study of Epictetus. Let us, before going further, inquire what those materials are.

(1) They are, first of all, the four books entitled the *Diatribes of Epictetus*. The use of the word diatribe in this case calls for some notice. It is a Greek word which meant originally any way of spending time in amusement or in study. Then from the latter use it came to have the meaning of a philosophical discourse, and it is in this sense that Arrian employs it here.[1] These four books are all that now remain of Arrian's work. Others have been lost.

[1] It is only in comparatively modern times that diatribe has come to mean an invective, a usage which may have arisen from the severely critical and controversial character of some philosophical treatises.

(2) Secondly, we have about thirty fragments which were probably taken from the lost books of Arrian's collection. These we owe to a writer named Stobaeus (already quoted) who has left us a *Florilegium*, i.e. a nosegay of extracts from Greek philosophers and poets, which is of considerable value, as many of the works from which he quotes, are no longer extant. Not a little of our knowledge of antiquity is due either to writers like Stobaeus who published 'Elegant Extracts,' or to Fathers of the Church, such as Clement of Alexandria and Augustine who quoted largely from the literature in which they had received their early education. Such fragments give us some idea as to the great mass of poetry, philosophy, and history which has perished.

(3) Thirdly, we have what is called the *Manual of Epictetus*. It is really Arrian's work, being an endeavour to arrange and systematise the very discursive reports of the sage's teaching, given in the *Diatribes*. It contains nothing fresh, and when read alone, as is too often the case, it gives an inadequate idea of the vigorous, homely, persistent preaching of the master. As M. Martha has

said, in the *Manual*, Epictetus is represented as imposing laws, but in the *Discourses* he discusses and seeks to persuade. In the *Discourses* you are face to face with a man, while in the *Manual* you are looking up at the marble or bronze statue of the ideal Stoic.

I ought here to notice the translations which are at the disposal of the English reader. Long's translation[1] includes the *Discourses*, *Fragments*, and *Manual*. The translation is on the whole faithful, though it may be doubted if the rendering of philosophical terms is really accurate. Indeed, it is the rendering of these philosophical terms which is the principal difficulty of the translator. However well and carefully his work is done, the want of precisely corresponding words in English will always put the reader of Epictetus in a translation at a disadvantage as compared with a moderate Greek scholar. The word *Proairesis*, for instance, which is of primary importance throughout is not exactly the same as choice, or purpose, or preference, or will, but more or less includes all these.[2]

[1] Pub. Bell, 5/.

[2] Again Long renders the Greek word Dogma by 'will,' which is entirely misleading. It should rather be 'conviction.'

Long's notes are of little value, being largely criticisms on the notes of a previous translator, Mrs. Carter, who had been somewhat too zealous in her comparisons of Epictetus with the New Testament, to the disadvantage of the former. Neither Mrs. Carter[1] nor Long himself really grasp the relation between the two, and Long certainly shows an inability to understand the passages of Scripture to which he refers.

The other books likely to be in the hands of English readers are, Rolleston's *Teaching of Epictetus* in Lubbock's *Hundred Best Books*; and *Golden Sayings*, a selection from Epictetus, lately published as a volume of the Golden Treasury Series. While both these volumes are useful for their valuable introductory matter, they can neither of them take the place of the full text of the four books of the *Discourses*. They contain only extracts and selections.

These, then, are the materials before us. But in order to estimate Epictetus' teaching

[1] Mrs. Elizabeth Carter, the first translator of Epictetus in English, has been brought back to notice by an interesting sketch entitled '*A Woman of Wit and Wisdom*' (A. Gaussen, 1905).

we must glance at the Stoic system as a whole. Epictetus is but the most attractive representative of a great school of thought, the influence of which was spread over more than five hundred years. The line of its descent from Socrates has been traced, but nothing has yet been said as to the nature of the Stoic philosophy. We often use the term Stoicism as if it meant merely a habit of endurance and indifference to externals. It was much more; it was a complete ethical system. Nay, it was more than that; it was a complete philosophy. It is true that in its later phases its interest lay chiefly in Ethics, and in the practical aspect of them; but it cannot be understood unless we take into view its whole contents, and this is just what some of its modern admirers fail to do.

Let us, then, observe first of all that the Stoics divided philosophy into three departments—Logic, Physics, Ethics. Philosophy, so we are told, was compared by them to an egg. Logic was the shell, Ethics the white, and Physics the yolk of the egg. What did these three divisions severally comprehend? The derivation of the words will help us. Logic is derived from *logos*, reason,

and comprehends everything relating to the human reason, both the methods by which it works and the forms in which it expresses itself, thus including grammar and rhetoric as well as psychology and the laws of thought.

Next we come to Physics. In modern scientific language Physics has come to mean the study of the laws of Nature in one particular respect, namely, the action of force upon matter. But originally Physics (Greek, *Phusika*) denoted the knowledge of Nature (*Phusis*) in its widest sense, including earth and heaven, gods and men. Thus theology itself is a department of Physics. This wide sense of Nature must be borne in mind when we come to the Stoic maxim that we are to live conformably to Nature.

Thirdly, for that is the order adopted by the later Stoics, though not by Chrysippus,[1] we come to Ethics. The Greek work *Ēthos* means moral disposition or character, and Ethics is the department of philosophy which concerns itself with this. It is obvious that

[1] Chrysippus, however, had insight enough to see that Ethics must depend on Physics, *i.e.* on theology, and so is practically inconsistent, for which Plutarch attacks him in his treatise on the inconsistencies of the Stoics (*De Repugn. Stoicorum*, § 9), an interesting passage.

Ethics must depend in part on the other two divisions of philosophy. Its definitions, syllogisms, and modes of expression will be regulated by Logic. Its conclusions as to conduct must be in relation to what is known and believed about the world we live in, and the powers which regulate it—that is to say, in relation to Physics.

Let us now briefly review Stoic doctrine under the three divisions mentioned above.

(1) Logic. We need not concern ourselves with the Stoic teaching as to grammar and rhetoric, but something will need to be said as to their theory of knowledge, as this plays a prominent part in the *Discourses*. The mind of man is by nature a blank, on which anything may be written. To it there come, through the senses, appearances or 'phantasies,' the latter being simply the Greek word *phantasia* transliterated. The word contains in itself the notion of something fallacious and illusory.[1] You will again and again read in the *Discourses* about the immense importance of the way in which we deal with appearances or phantasies, the

[1] 'Thou art a phantasy and by no means that which thou seemest to be.' *Manual*, 1.

convictions (dogmas) which we have with regard to them, the assent or refusal with which we receive them. From these appearances, that is to say from the impressions which reach us through the senses, the mind forms conceptions, and goes on to compare and combine them, thus acquiring general notions, as, for instance, the notion of 'the good.' This will be enough to say at present, but we shall have to return to the subject when we come to the bearing of Epictetus' logic upon his ethics.

(2) Physics. More must be said as to the Stoic Physics. And here, it must be repeated, that Stoic Physics show in the plainest way the influence of Heracleitus. That great Ephesian preceded Socrates by nearly a century, yet his importance in the history of thought is only in our own day coming to be adequately recognised. We have seen that this department included theology, the relation of the world to God, its origin, constitution, and destiny. The world is the work of God, but yet God is scarcely personal. I will quote Mr. Capes (*Stoicism*, p. 38) nearly verbatim. 'If we ask what were the real features of their creed, we shall find to

our surprise that it was Pantheism undisguised. God is the eternal substance which is always varying its moods, and passing into different forms as the creative work goes forward. He may therefore be alike conceived as the primary matter and as the efficient force which shapes the derivative materials of which all things are made.' God is the soul of the world, He is mind, He is fire, which burns up all things and then constitutes them afresh.[1] God is the permanent primal element of fire into which all things will be resolved,[2] and then come forth to begin again the same course. There is a *magnus annus* (great year), a great cycle which ends in a conflagration, begins afresh, ends again in a conflagration, and so constantly recurs. All things are material, and therefore destructible by it; all things are material—the soul itself and all its several affections, virtues, and vices.[3] All things are perishable, in everything there is change and decay.

[1] This would be tantamount to saying to-day that God is electric force.

[2] Cp. Zeus is solitary in the conflagration, *Diss.* IV. xiii.

[3] Plutarch, *De Communibus Notitiis*, § 45.

Let me paraphrase a striking passage in which the doctrine of the *magnus annus* is expounded by Nemesius, a Christian writer of the fourth century. 'The Stoics say that when the planets return to the same position in which each of them was at the beginning when first the universe was constituted, an event which recurs at fixed periods of time, then the conflagration and destruction of all existing things is consummated; and after that, the Universe is restored afresh to its former state, and each of the stars sets forth afresh on its course. For there will again be a Socrates and a Plato, and every man that has lived will live again in company with the same friends and citizens, and suffer the same things, and meet the same circumstances, and take the same business in hand as before, and every city and village and field will be restored as before. And this restoration of the Universe, will happen, not once for all, but many times, nay rather "*ad infinitum*," and thus endlessly the same series will be renewed.'

You can realise the gloom which such a prospect must have cast over the lives of those who accepted it. Progress is impossible.

To quote the words of Dr. Bussell, 'Stoicism in its very nature is excluded from the consolations of a belief in general progress and development. The Universe is, here and now, what it has always been, and always will be. Life has nothing new to place before our wearied eyes, the world process has nothing precious which it is laboriously evolving.' Set side by side with this Stoic expectation the 'expectation of the creature' as St. Paul sees it. 'The creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.'[1] When we are struck, as we shall be with the many points between Stoic and Christian ethics, we must recall the contrasts between their respective views of God and of human destiny. Yet it is no small merit that the Stoics saw clearly the evidences of design which the world supplies and of the providence which directs and sustains its course.[2] It is to Stoic philosophy and not to the New Testament that we owe

[1] Rom. viii. 21.

[2] 'Who made these things or devised them (*i.e.* the whole economy of nature)? No one, you say. O amazing shamelessness and stupidity.' *Diss.* I. xvi.

the word 'Providence'[1] as denoting the care of God for man.

This then was the creed of the school to which Epictetus belonged. Let us inquire how far he followed the creed of his school with regard to God and Nature. In the first place it is clear that speculation as such did not interest him. He did not feel it to be his business. His business was to make men good and happy and free. But it is plain that guidance in the conduct of life must be in close relation to what is believed with regard to God and his Providence.

Here Epictetus went beyond the ordinary Stoic creed. He was feeling his way to a theology higher than that of the Stoics.[2] The vague impersonal Stoic God was invested with moral qualities, benevolence, affection and approval of righteousness. Inversely, God

[1] Zeller's *Stoics*, tr. Reichel, p. 177. But the Stoic notion of Providence is entirely based on a view of the Universe as a whole. Individual persons and things only come under its consideration as dependent parts of the whole and not in respect of separate needs.

[2] It is true that in the *Manual* he speaks not of God, but of the gods. This was probably an accommodation to common belief, such as was common with the Stoics.

became the object of loyalty and filial devotion. Undoubtedly we are prone to read Epictetus in the light of our Christian theistic beliefs, but making allowance for this, it is still clear that in him Stoicism was touched with an appreciable amount of emotion, inconsistent with its original coldness. His conception of God's providence is that of a particular providence, so far as is consistent with regarding the individual as an item in the general unalterable scheme of the Universe. *Diss.* I. xii.

In a very striking passage (*Diss.* I. xiv.) he meets one of the difficulties which arise from the conception of a particular Providence, by arguing from the wonderful powers of observation which man possesses, to what the corresponding divine powers may very well be.[1]

(3) Ethics. But it is time to go on to the third division of Stoic philosophy as taught by its professors and represented by Epictetus.

Their Ethics were based on their psychology. Life, so they taught, should be lived conform-

[1] It should, however, be remarked that he is here borrowing from Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, I. v.

ably to Nature. No doubt this meant in the first instance, a willing submission to the universal laws of external Nature regarded as the expression of the will of God. In that aspect conformity to Nature had to be interpreted by the Stoic Physics. But there was another aspect of the maxim, 'follow Nature,' in which it was interpreted by the psychology or mental philosophy which formed part of the Stoic Logic. Nature might also mean the mental constitution of man. We shall observe by and by the incompatibility of these two interpretations between which Stoicism wavered. For man, life according to Nature must be life according to his own nature. But what is man's nature? The phrase is ambiguous. And here they went astray. Instead of asking what is the constitution of human nature as a whole, and the relation of its several parts, they merely asked what is its distinctive characteristic? The former is the right question for the purpose in hand, and this, as you remember, is what Bishop Butler asks in the valuable preface to his *Sermons*. He there deals with the Stoic maxim, 'follow nature,' and shows in what sense a Christian

moralist may accept it. But as I have said, the Stoics instead of recognising the complexity of human nature and its character as a system or constitution, simply inquired, what is the characteristic of man as compared with the lower animals? It is reason, by which we determine and reflect upon our action. It may be called the ruling or guiding faculty, as contrasted with mere instinct. This is man's true self; here we look for his nature. Through our senses, appearances (literally 'phantasies') are presented to us. A phantasy is a bare perception before reason has pronounced upon it. The use we make of these 'appearances,' how we deal with them, that is really the important thing in conduct. You will find this phrase 'the use of appearances' in *Diss.* I. i. and it recurs again and again. See, for instance, *Diss.* I. xii. 'For what have the gods made you responsible? For the use of appearances.' Animals accept these appearances at once and either grasp at them or shun them, but man can pause and decide whether to act upon them or not, whether to follow them or not. That is to say, man has a faculty of choice, a free will, which he

can exercise, and this, under the name of *Proairesis*, is the central conception in the *Discourses*. It is absolutely free[1] and unconquerable (*Diss.* I. xxix.). It is only the things which are within its power, which can truly be regarded as good and evil.

The reason or ruling faculty furnishes itself gradually with general notions[2] of good and evil. Every man desires the good, and turns from the evil. So far all is well. But what things are good? All will depend on the right application of these categories or conceptions of good and evil to the particular things which the senses present to us. It is here that disputes arise and mistakes are made. By all means read the chapter in which this point is illustrated, *Diss.* I. xxii., and compare with it *Diss.* II. xvii. Not only do we make mistakes in the several instances as they arise, but we fall into mistaken opinions or convictions (Greek, dogmas), which are always at hand to influence us in

[1] The teaching of the earlier Stoics as to Fate seems to imply a determinism inconsistent with this absolute freedom. For endeavours to reconcile the inconsistency see Ritter and Preller[8], §512.

[2] 'Precognitions,' in Long's translation. For their formation, see *Ritter and Preller*, 485, § c.

the wrong direction. 'Dogma' in Epictetus means the conviction which moves the will.[1] It is these dogmas about what is good and what is bad which really prompt human action. So we read: 'Neither death, nor exile, nor pain, nor anything of the kind is the cause of our doing or not doing anything, but our suppositions and opinions are the causes—that is to say, our opinions about what is good and what is not' (*Diss.* I. xi.).

Thus we come to the great Stoic paradox. The true view about good and evil, according to the Stoics, is this. Only the things which are within the power of our choice and will (*proairesis*) are truly good and evil, while all other things are 'indifferent.' Good and evil can only be rightly predicated of things which are in our own power. The things not in our own power, such as health and sickness, friends and enemies, riches and poverty, fame and obscurity, the prosperity or misfortune of those whom we love; all these are in the class of indifferent things, *i.e.* things which we are to regard with

[1] On the history of the word 'dogma,' see Hatch, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 120.

indifference, as not being within the range of our choice. This is, as you will see, to limit the idea of good to moral good, and of evil to moral evil; and the limitation was, indeed, a necessary corollary of the Stoic position that the world was perfect. All external things are like the shells which children play with. They very rightly do not care about the shells; they care about the game (*Diss.* IV. vii.). It is evident that a view of life so clean contrary to common sense could only be established in the minds of its disciples by a severe course of training, by '*askesis*'—that is to say, by exercise or practice. An ascetic is properly a person who trains and exercises himself in order to obtain moral strength, just as a gymnast acquires bodily strength by his exercises. There is much practical direction in the *Discourses* for this asceticism, and much vigorous exhortation to embrace it, but in private and unostentatiously. Moreover, they emphasised the power of habit to strengthen moral fibre. The true athlete is the man who exercises himself in resisting appearances, *i.e.* the temptations as the Christian would call them, which come to

him through the senses (*Diss.* II. xviii.). Thus the Stoic who professed to find the true way of life in living conformably to Nature in the sense of external Nature, who 'cheerfully pronounced that the world was made for man's use, finds his only work in a passive resistance to the course of Nature,[1] in renunciation of the so-called rational Universe.' This resistance or challenging of appearances is the great practical work of moral philosophy as Epictetus taught it. It is moral self-culture. But it is more than that. It comes nearer than that to the Christian ideal. For it is definitely and plainly self-culture in relation to the will of God. 'A traveller has heard that the road is infested by robbers. He does not venture to enter upon it alone, but he waits for the companionship upon the road either of an ambassador, or of a quaestor, or of a proconsul, and when he has attached himself to such a person he traverses the road in safety. So in the world the wise man acts. Is it possible, he says, to find a

[1] Bussell's *The School of Plato*, p. 181. The contradiction here exposed had been dwelt on by Plutarch, *De Communibus Notitiis*, 4-5.

safe fellow-traveller (for the journey of life), a faithful one, strong and secure against all surprises? Thus the wise man considers, and perceives that if he attaches himself to God he will make his journey in safety' (*Diss.* IV. i.).

LECTURE III.

EPICTETUS.

We have already surveyed in outline the principles from which Stoic Ethics, and in particular the Ethics of Epictetus, were developed. We must now endeavour to criticise[1] those principles themselves, and the practical teaching to which they led. We will begin by observing what seems false or defective in the system, and then notice its strong points. Take first the fundamental distinction which is drawn between things which are in our own power, and those which are not. It is far too sharp a distinction. Many external things are to a great extent in our own power. A man's power over the circumstances of his life is considerable. To ignore this power because it is uncertain, incomplete, and liable

[1] For contemporary criticism see Plutarch's *De Repugnantiis Stoicorum* (on the Contradictions of the Stoics), Goodwin's Translation of Plutarch's *Morals*, vol. iv.

to be thwarted, is to ignore facts. The attitude of the Stoic towards external goods is like the sulkiness of a child, who because he cannot have his own way in everything, will have nothing to do with what is going on. Carried out into practice such a view would arrest and crush all the energies of life. Bear and forbear (literally abstain and endure), is far too passive a conception of life to satisfy such a creature as man. Yet these words may fairly be taken as the sum and substance of Epictetus' rule of life.

The next point to criticise is the conclusion drawn from the view stated above. The good of man must be something within his reach, and therefore must be limited to things within his power, namely to things which are matters of moral choice, within the sphere of the will (*proairesis*). This is, as we have already seen, to restrict the ideas of good and evil to moral good and evil only. Here was a magnificent assertion of the superiority of the spiritual over the material, though Epictetus would not have so worded it, for the Stoics were thorough-going materialists. Not only was the soul material, but even the several virtues and vices were material, inas-

much as they consisted of certain tensions within the soul.[1] Thus they abandoned the belief in the unity of the soul, which is a necessary condition of the conception of personality, and they approached from quite another side the Buddhist conception of self, as a mere aggregate of faculties capable of being broken up.

Now consider this doctrine of no evil except moral evil, as proposed to mankind generally. All external things, health and sickness; pleasure and torture, are indifferent. Common sense revolts against such a statement, and common sense is right. If this be the foundation on which moral life has to be built, there can be no hope for the moral betterment of mankind. Let those who exalt Epictetus in comparison with the Gospel lay this to heart. We have learnt from the Gospel that external blessings are good, and yet that we may be content to sacrifice them for some thing better; that pain is evil, and yet that we may nerve ourselves to bear it.

[1] Plutarch (*De Comm. Not.* 45), criticising this view of the virtues and vices as bodies or living creatures, says with some humour that they thus made a park or menagerie or Trojan horse of the soul, tenanted by this disorderly swarm of separate existences.

The sympathy of Christ with human suffering, His works of healing, and the way in which He met His own sufferings in Gethsemane, are an acknowledgment of the real good and evil of external things, which satisfies the instincts of human nature, and both justifies compassion to us, and commends it as a guide of action. If the Stoic admitted compassion at all, he did so in defiance of his principles, by one of those many contradictions which were, as Plutarch has shown, characteristic of the school. To evince compassion was to encourage in others those false opinions (dogmas) as to good and evil of which the Stoic was striving to divest himself.[1] So in the *Manual* (XVI.) we read, 'When you see a person weeping in sorrow, either when a child goes abroad, or when a child is dead, or when property has been lost, take care that the appearance do not carry you away with it, as though the man himself were involved in evils which are (really) external

[1] There is a curious parallel between Stoic teaching as to pain being merely the result of a false opinion which has to be got rid of, and Christian Science, which says that 'mind makes its own pain, that is its belief in pain, and that all you have to do is to assert the supremacy of the spirit over the flesh.'

to him. But let the thought be at once ready to your mind, that it is not what has happened which causes the man pain, but his opinion (dogma) about it. Do not hesitate so far as words go to express sympathy with him, and it may be, to join in his lamentations, but *take care that you do not lament inwardly.*' That is to say, the Stoic might make a profession of sympathy, but was on no account to allow it really to affect him.[1]

The Eudaemonism of the Old Testament is sometimes severely criticised, but the sound foundation which is there laid as to the value of temporal blessings bestowed by God, and their relation to human conduct, is a necessary basis for the teaching which both the Old and the New Testament contain as to blessings which are still better.

It must indeed be added here that the

[1] An interesting parallel to the Stoic depreciation of compassion is to be found in Spinoza, Eth. iv., *De Servitute Humana*, Prop. L. 'Compassion in a man who lives by the guidance of reason is in itself evil and useless. Hence it follows that a man who lives by the sway of reason will do his best to avoid being affected by compassion.' Further on, he allows the necessity of compassion for the inferior person who does not live by the guidance of reason.

harsh proposition 'all external things are indifferent' was somewhat softened by Chrysippus and other Stoics, who admitted a distinction between some 'indifferent' things and others, describing those as preferable which could be made to contribute to moral excellence.

Yet along with this keen sense of moral evil which expresses itself in the paradox that there is no evil beside it, there is no sense of sin. The word indeed is not absent, but the conception is. 'The consciousness of sin is only possible where there is a clear sense of a personal relation to a personal Being whom we are bound to love and obey, whose will must be the law of our lives, and should be the joy of our hearts.'[1] There is, however, just an approach to the Christian standpoint in *Diss.* III. i. (lest God's wrath fall upon us). But the normal view of Epictetus is that sinners, whether robbers, adulterers, or other evil doers, are merely persons who are mistaken as to what is good. 'Can a man think that a thing is useful to him and not choose it.' Epictetus confidently replies that he cannot. 'Consider

[1] Lightfoot, *Philippians* (St. Paul and Seneca).

the matter thus. You have fine clothes; your neighbour has not. You have a window, you wish to air the clothes. The thief does not know wherein man's good consists, but he thinks that it consists in having fine clothes, the very thing which you also think. Must he not then come and take them away?' (*Diss.* I. xviii.). So all evil-doing arises simply from mistakes on the part of the evil-doer as to what is good for him. This view of the matter is simply contrary to experience. Every man knows that in many instances he has done wrong through passion (taking passion (*pathos*) in the wide Greek sense), when he knew that what he was about to do was not good for him. St. Paul delineates human nature more accurately than Epictetus. 'The good which I would, I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I practise' (Rom. vii. 19). The mistake of the Stoics in their analysis of human action arose from their failure to recognise feeling, emotion, passion, as legitimate and primary constituents of human nature. But instead of being regarded as distinct from reason, the emotions were considered, as Mr. Capes has said (*Stoicism*, p. 47), to have their seat within

the reason, but to be wholly disturbing and misleading forces.[1] Here we may observe by the way that a religion such as Christianity, which made its appeal to the feelings and affections as well as to the reason, was at once self-condemned in the estimation of the Stoic.

But to return to the question of Epictetus' attitude towards evil-doers. They are simply to be pitied for not knowing what is good for them. Yes, we may reply, the sinner is to be pitied; but in most cases, even in the heathen world, it will be for his weakness in yielding to passion, or for an ignorance of the good, which, so far as it exists, is of his own choosing. We must not allow our admiration of the gentle, forgiving spirit of the sage to blind us to the falsehood of his psychology. And not only does he fail to recognise the virulence of sin in the individual, but there is, moreover, no recognition whatever of the infectious endemic power of sin in the human race, which is emphasised so strongly and with so much truth by St. Paul.

[1] 'Now passion (*pathos*), according to Zeno, is either an unreasoning and unnatural movement of the soul or a greedy instinct.'

As there was in the Stoic system no conception of sin against a Personal God, so there was, of course, no place or need for repentance towards him or for pardon and help for amendment on his part. This is hardly to be classed as a defect in ethical teaching, but should rather be dealt with in the comparison of Stoic and Christian theology. Still it does involve a mistake, and that is the excessive estimate of the freedom of the human will, even when evil habits have permanently weakened it. The sense of bare ability continues in spite of any length of evil habit, although in spite of this illusive sense the power of resistance is practically gone.[1]

Though there can be for Epictetus no question of repentance towards God, there is a very fine chapter on the moral reformation of a bad man (*Diss.* IV. ix.). Self-help is its main thought. 'Be well assured,' he says, 'that nothing is more tractable than the human soul. You must exercise the will, and the thing is done.' This confident language is pardonable as the rhetoric of an earnest man, but it is not true.

[1] Cp. Mozley, *Augustinian Doctrine of Predestination*, chap. iii.

Then there is the question of suicide. The Stoic view of life must not be described as a gloomy one. There is a brave cheerfulness throughout the *Discourses*. But the renunciation of all that makes life desirable to the ordinary man, and the constant insistence on readiness to part with life rather than submit to anything unworthy of the wise man, must necessarily have tended to loosen the natural human clinging to existence, and to bring suicide into prominence. Epictetus does not encourage the tendency. He deprecates it, and replies to those who recommend suicide: 'My friends, wait for God. When He shall give the signal and release you from this service, then go to Him; but for the present endure to dwell in the place where He has put you' (*Diss.* I. ix.). We naturally ask, What is the signal? That Epictetus does not absolutely condemn suicide is clear from a later chapter (*Diss.* I. xxv.). 'Remember this,' he says, 'the door is open. Be not more timid than little children; but as they say when things do not please them, I will play no longer, so do you say, when things come to that point, I will play no longer, and take your departure; but if you stay, do not complain.'

The last defect to be noticed is one to which I have already called attention. The Stoic Physics, as we have seen, excluded the idea of progress. Cycles are completed in the history of the world, and then begin over again. The idea of individual progress (*prokope*), indeed, is emphasised in the *Discourses*, but even there, there is no ultimate goal, no hint of personal existence after death which the progress can keep in view. The later Stoicism following Panaetius had abandoned even the scanty hope of an existence after death for stronger souls which might last to the end of the cycle.[1] This, indeed, is not a defect in the Ethical system properly so-called, but a defect in belief, which could not but exercise a chilling effect on that system. And it had that effect not so much by the absence of the stimulus of future reward and punishment as by the depressing sense that all efforts after a higher life must come to nought, and be cut off without attaining their goal. It is, moreover, obvious that a system which refused to recognise the material evils of the world as being truly evil lacked

[1] Cp. Dill's *Roman Society*, pp. 508 ff., on the absolute rejection of such a hope by M. Aurelius.

that incentive to belief in a future life which springs from perplexity at the inequalities and injustices of the world, and longs for a day of judgment and compensation. Yet the Stoic teaching was really a preparation for a faith which it absolutely refused to entertain. When man arrives at such a conception of the pre-eminence of soul over body, and spirit over matter, as Epictetus reached, he is well on the way to believe in a life to come.

It is a more grateful task to turn to the striking merits of Stoic morality as taught in the *Discourses*.

1. First let us take their unworldliness. At the very time that the St. John was writing the words, 'Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world,' Epictetus was teaching and enforcing the letter and spirit of that great precept. What is caution about 'the use of appearances' but an uncompromising warning against 'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life'? (1 John ii. 16). The Stoic teacher, indeed, pushes it to an extreme which would, if attained, break up society, but of his honesty and consistency there can be no

doubt. We may learn something from him, for this is the side on which the Christian standard is constantly liable to deteriorate and become untrue to its principles.

2. The practical character of the teaching of Epictetus. Here we have something specially characteristic of the man, and less so of the school which he represents. He is never tired of repeating that what is really of importance is, not to know what Chrysippus and other masters have said, but to put their teaching into practice. We are constantly reminded of Christ's words, 'If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them' (John xiii. 17). Epictetus is much more a preacher than a philosopher. He wants to move men and inspire them, rather than to inform them. This is how he addresses them. 'Make a desperate effort on behalf of tranquillity, freedom, greatness of soul.' 'Look up to heaven, as one who is a friend of God, and fear nothing that can happen.' He gives directions for the formation and abolition of habits of the soul. 'When you have been angry, you must know that not only has this evil befallen you, but that you have also increased the habit, and, in

a manner, thrown fuel on the fire. If you wish not to be of an angry temper, do not feed the habit, keep quiet, and count the days on which you have not been angry' (*Diss.* II. xviii.). There is also an admirable chapter on Attention (*prosoche*), *Diss.* IV. xii., a frame of mind nearly corresponding to Christian watchfulness (Rev. iii. 2). 'When you have remitted your attention for a short time, do not imagine that you will recover it when you choose, but let this thought be present to you, that in consequence of the fault committed to-day, you will be in worse case for all that follows. For first, and what causes most trouble, a habit of not attending (to your conduct) is formed in you; and then a habit of deferring your attention. And you get into the habit of deferring to some future time that which would bring you tranquillity (*euroia*), right conduct, and a life conformable to nature.' Epictetus is a preacher, but if a preacher, he is no rhetorician. He disdains the thought of display,[1] and the desire of praise. Addressing

[1] Seneca had already exposed the empty orators who saw in morals nothing more than the matter for elegant discourses.

the would-be teacher, he says, 'When you invite me to come and hear you lecture, take care that you are not doing this without a purpose, then consider if it is the right purpose. Do you wish to do good, or do you wish to be praised?' (*Diss.* III. xxiii.). Epictetus preaches after the manner of our own Latimer. He is conversational. He knows how to employ those anecdotes of persons with whom he has to do, which are still the surest way of arresting attention. He uses homely, and sometimes very coarse illustrations, which are sure to be remembered. Testimony to the success of his method is given by Origen. 'You will find Plato with his beautiful style in the hands of students of language, you will find Epictetus with his simpler style in the hands of the common people.'[1] His wit and epigrammatic phrases impress moral truths. Nor is likeness to a Christian minister of religion confined to his rôle of preacher. He does not indeed write letters of 'spiritual direction' as his predecessor Seneca had done. But he remonstrates with individuals, exposes their faults, uses plain dealing, probes the reality of their convictions.

[1] See Patrick, *Apology of Origen*, p. 130.

'The philosopher's school is a surgery; you ought not to go out of it with pleasure, but with pain' (*Diss.* III. xxiii.). We are reminded of the young man who went away sorrowful (Matt. xix. 22). Epictetus has a lofty conception not only of his own mission, but also of that of others who desire to follow in his steps as teachers of morality. No chapter of the *Discourses* is better worth reading than that in which he describes to one of his pupils the life and work of the true Cynic (*Diss.* III. xxiii.). The true Cynic must know that he is sent as a messenger (cp. N.T. *apostolos*) from Zeus to men about good and bad things. The divine call is insisted on as a necessary qualification. Not even wisdom is enough, he must have God to advise him to occupy the office. M. Martha says of this chapter as a whole,[1] 'I do not know whether even in our days one could better define the rôle of a Christian missionary.' Epictetus' acute observation is shown in his appreciation of the danger to which a moral teacher is exposed in familiar association with worldly persons, and of the certainty that he will be carried away by their view

[1] Martha, *op. cit.* p. 164.

of things, if he has not definite hold of his own principles. The difficulty of raising or tuning (as he expresses it) a low tone of conversation is dwelt on by Epictetus, and it is one which every earnest minister of religion has encountered in his pastoral work.

3. Relative duties. Epictetus insists on these though not with so much fulness as one would expect. We must remember that we have before us only the notes of those discourses, which Arrian chose to preserve, and indeed not all even of them, for one or more of Arrian's books of the *Discourses* have been lost. Still Epictetus does follow the other great Stoics in the importance assigned to relative duties.[1] It is interesting to observe that the only passage in which St. Paul uses the Greek word given below, is Rom. i. 28, where he has been describing how men might have attained, and indeed did attain knowledge of God and His will (as philosophers) from the contemplation of His works, but were unfaithful to their knowledge, and so were 'given over to a reprobate mind

[1] Gk. *καθήκοντα*, Lat. *officia*, literally things which are fitting.

to do those things which are not[1] fitting,' *i.e.* to violate relative duties. But to return to Epictetus. 'There are,' he says, 'three spheres in which a man ought to exercise himself, if he means to be noble and good, and the second is concerned with that which is fitting (*i.e.* relative duties). For I must not be dead to natural feeling, but must cherish natural and acquired relations, as a religious man, as a son, as a brother, as a father, as a citizen'[2] (*Diss.* III. ii.).

Again we have the same conception of duties arising from our relation to others in *Diss.* II. x. 'You are a citizen,' he says, but instead of deducing from this a man's political duties, patriotism, loyalty and the like, he merely draws the Stoic conclusion, that he must regard himself as a part of the system

[1] Gk. *τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα.*

[2] I have here given only fragments of a very important passage. It deserves study, and the following passage from Dr. Hatch's *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 153, will explain it. 'Human nature manifests itself in two forms, desires to have or not to have, efforts to do or not to do. The one is stimulated by the presentation to the mind of an object which is judged to be "good," the other by that of one which is judged to be fitting. The one mainly concerns the individual man in himself, the other concerns him in his relations with other men.'

of Nature and submit himself to whatever suffering this may involve him in, for to the Stoic, man was not a citizen of a particular state, but a citizen of the world, a cosmopolite.[1] Indeed we may say that the creed of Stoicism, if strictly adhered to, incapacitated a man for affairs.[2] In criticising the aloofness of Stoicism from political duties and political life we must bear in mind that it was a vindication of the independence of the individual from the slavery in which, in all ancient constitutions, the state had held him. This emancipation of the individual could not be effected without an extreme movement in the opposite direction, and that it was effected is to be set to the credit of Stoicism.[3]

The next relation taken in *Diss.* II. x. is the filial relation. 'Remember that you are a son.' Then he goes on to explain filial duty much as we might explain the fifth commandment. 'Next remember that you are a brother, that you are a senator,

[1] *κόσμου πολίτης.*

[2] It is however true that Zeno advised entrance into political life. See Seneca, *de Otio*, III. 2, quoted by Dill, *Roman Society*, p. 325.

[3] Cp. Fustel de Coulanges, *La Cité Antique*, v. ch. i.

that you are a youth, that you are an old man,' and so he touches very briefly on the duties of these relations and positions. But the motive for discharging the duties is not consideration of the welfare of others or of the will of God, but the loss and injury to your own character, if you do not discharge them rightly. When we hurt others, it is ourselves whom we really hurt. This distinction comes out clearly when we compare the Greek and English terms which are in question. The Greek term translated 'that which is fitting' signifies originally that which 'becomes' us. The English word duty like its Latin original, *debitum* (debt), signifies that which is owing on our part, due from us either to God or to our fellowmen.[1]

[1] Both *officium* and *debitum* were employed in Latin to represent τὸ καθῆκον.

LECTURE IV.

EPICTETUS.

We have again to take up our review of those points in the teaching of Epictetus and the Stoics generally which command our special respect. But before passing on to (4) their doctrine of the Fatherhood and Providence of God, and (5) the reality of an unalterable moral standard, there are two points which arise out of the consideration of the Stoic view of relative duties which occupied us in the last lecture. Epictetus prefaces one account of those duties with the words, 'I must not be dead to natural feeling.'[1] We have already seen that the Stoics put out of court all passions and emotions as unworthy elements of human nature, and that this mistake had serious consequences for their morality. Epictetus finds it impos-

[1] Greek, ἀπαθής.

sible to be consistent on this point. He cannot but admit some play of natural feeling. His heart gets the better of him. Yet we may admit that in popular modern morality there is a danger of valuing the feelings too highly. We may learn something from the Stoics, though we may not go so far as James Mill, whose son tells us[1] that his father regarded 'the great stress laid upon feeling as an aberration of the moral standard of modern times compared with that of the ancients.' 'Feeling as such,' he said, 'is no proper subject of praise or blame.'

The other point is that the cosmopolitan view so characteristic both of Greek and Roman Stoics finds its parallel in the Christian conception of the Kingdom of God, in which also distinctions of race and place disappear. 'The city of God, of which the Stoics doubtfully and feebly spoke, was now set up before the eyes of men. It was no insubstantial city, such as we fancy in the clouds, no invisible pattern such as Plato thought might be laid up in heaven, but a visible corporation, whose members met together to eat bread and drink wine, and

[1] J. S. Mill, *Autobiography*, p. 49.

into which they were initiated by bodily immersion in water. Here the Gentile met the Jew, whom he had been accustomed to regard as an enemy of the human race; the Roman met the lying Greek sophist, the Syrian slave the gladiator born beside the Danube. In brotherhood they met, the natural birth and kindred of each forgotten, the baptism alone remembered in which they had been born again to God and each other.'[1]

4. The Fatherhood and Providence of God. We have an excellent summary of Stoic theology in St. Paul's speech at Athens (Acts xvii. 24 ff.) if we stop short of the last two verses (vv. 30-1). He goes as far as he can with the Stoics, and emphasises the points in common between himself and them, in direct opposition to the Epicureans, his object being to carry if possible the Stoics with him to recognise the entirely new revelation of God's Providence in Christ which he was come to preach. A prominent topic in the speech is, therefore, the Fatherhood and Providence of God. He quotes in behalf of it the Stoic Cleanthes:[2] 'For we are also His offspring.' Compare with this the teaching

[1] *Ecce Homo*, ch. xii. [2] Cleanthes, *Hymn to Zeus*, l. 4.

of Epictetus. Man may call himself a son of God (*Diss.* I. ix.). We are bound up with God and united to Him, as being parts and fragments of Him (*Diss.* I. xiv.). Our divine Father is the maker and sustainer of the world. His Providence extends to every part of it, and enters into every detail of it. All is for the best. This optimistic view of the evils of the world and the miseries of life could only be reached by those whose philosophy refused to recognise evil in material things, and confined the notion of evil to the sphere of morals, where evil could arise from that freedom of the human will which God had given to man. Far from feeling any difficulty about the perilous trial which freedom of the will involves, he held that any other condition of human life would be unworthy of Him who originated it.[1] 'If God had made that

[1] Here we have an instance of the frequent inconsistencies of the Stoics. They held also, and Epictetus among the rest, a strict doctrine of necessity. Zeus and Necessity were not distinct as in the Greek Tragedians, but practically identical. Cp. the lines previously quoted on p. 88 :

'Lead me, O Zeus, and Thou, O Destiny,
The way that I am bid by you to go.'
'To follow I am ready. If I choose not
I make myself a wretch, and still must follow.'

Cleanthes.

part of Himself, which He took from Himself and gave to us, of such a nature as to be hindered or compelled, either by Himself or another, He would not then be God, neither would He be taking care of us, as He ought' (*Diss.* I. xvii.). For God does take care of the world which He created. Enough has already been said in a previous lecture on the Stoic conception of Providence, and the more distinct will and personality with which that conception was invested by Epictetus. But something must be added with regard to a difficulty which is acutely felt by the Christian. How much there is in Nature which appears to contradict the idea of a benevolent Providence. For Epictetus God and the Universe were one and the same thing. Revelation, and this is precisely the meaning of revelation, had not shown him a God behind Nature, transcendent as well as immanent, of whose true attributes Nature gives no sufficient account. Acquiescence in the order of the Universe, in Nature with all the suffering involved in it, was therefore demanded by piety,[1] and was devoutly given by Epictetus. But we have learnt, or partly

[1] Farrar, *Seekers after God*, p. 231.

learnt, to distinguish between blind, unforgiving Nature and a Personal God. The history of Israel under the Old Covenant has taught us this, but much more the Incarnation. We suffer as part of the Universe as at present constituted, of which suffering is a condition (*Diss.* I. xii.). So far Epictetus was right. The suffering of the individual, taken on a whole, is not to be regarded as specially sent, but as his necessary share in the groaning and travailing of the whole creation. But we do not go with Epictetus in recognising all the evil and misery of the world, and the opposition which it appears to make to moral progress, as representing the will and character of God. He, on the contrary, is bringing good out of evil. He has come down to earth in human form to take visible part in the struggle, and to enable us to take our part, not merely as spectators and interpreters (*Diss.* I. vi.), but as fellow-workers (1 Cor. iii. 9). Thus the Incarnation, if it does not resolve the problem of suffering, makes it tolerable for the present, and promises both ultimate victory and ultimate explanation.

5. There is still one other point of the highest importance which finds full recogni-

tion by Epictetus. As has been well shown by Bagehot,[1] religious belief, belief in revelation, rests on our conviction of the reality of an innate standard of morality. This basis is clear and firm in Roman Stoicism, ready for the Christian superstructure. It would be difficult to point out any special statement of this position in Epictetus, but it is assumed throughout. No question is anywhere raised as to the truth of the moral distinctions which previous ethical philosophy had laid down. They do not rest on national or individual opinion, on that which appears right to Syrians or Egyptians or Romans. There is a rule by which they can be decided (*Diss.* II. xi.). The rule is reason, and it speaks clearly. The only variation allowed is that amount of variation in moral standard which must go with the higher or lower moral development of the individual.[2] Some men aspire to be the purple stripe which adorns the robe, others are content to be one of the ordinary threads (*Diss.* I. ii.).

Looking back on our whole survey of the

[1] Bagehot, *Literary Studies*, vol. ii., Appendix, 'The Ignorance of Man.'

[2] Greek, τὰ κατὰ πρόσωπον ἑκάστου.

teaching of Epictetus, let us now endeavour briefly to compare it in some points with the teaching of those other moralists whom we previously considered. And first let us take Confucius. While the concern of Epictetus is with the individual, that of Confucius is with the state. It is the state and its administration which Confucius desires to make better. It is his failure to do this, owing to the indocility of contemporary rulers, that makes him believe that his mission has failed and closes his life in disappointment. The circumstances of the time of Epictetus, so utterly unlike those of Confucius, would have precluded any such purpose rising before him, even had the principles of his philosophy admitted it. Occupied with the conception of a shadowy world-wide polity incapable of realisation, and much more with the interests of the individual soul, the Stoic had no wish to enter into public life and ameliorate mankind by better government. 'Ask me also if a Cynic shall engage in the administration of a state. Fool, do you seek a greater sphere of administration (for him) than that in which he is (already) engaged? Shall he come forward in the Athenian assembly and

ask questions about revenues and supplies, he who ought to converse with all men, alike with Athenians, Corinthians and Romans, not about supplies, nor about revenues, nor yet about peace and war, but about happiness and unhappiness, about prosperity and adversity, about slavery and freedom'? (*Diss.* III. xxii.).

Yet the two great teachers do in one line of thought touch each other closely. You will remember the central Confucian doctrine of 'the Five relations,' on the maintenance of which national and individual welfare depends. So also Epictetus describes the philosopher as maintaining the relations natural and acquired, such as those of son, father, brother, citizen, husband, wife, neighbour, fellow-traveller, ruler, subject (*Diss.* II. xiv.). From these relations arise our duties (*lit.* things befitting us). Nay, more, the idea that the proper understanding of the names of these relations will suggest the duties belonging to them (*Diss.* II. x.) is found word for word in Confucius' *Analects.*

It is significant that while Confucius puts the relation between ruler and subject first, Epictetus, as one would expect, puts it last. The Confucian view that not only the external

welfare, but also the morality of the people depends on their rulers was quite alien from the Stoic creed. The ruler in Confucius is on the throne, the ruler in Epictetus is in the breast of the individual, namely the rational and ruling faculty.[1] This is beyond the reach and control of the ruler on the throne. Hence follows a contrast in the attitude of the two teachers towards the powers that be. Caesar, says Epictetus, is to be approached free from alarm and perturbation (*Diss.* IV. iv.). The bold, fearless, almost defiant attitude of the Stoic is in the sharpest contrast to the 'respectful uneasiness' of Confucius when he entered the presence chamber, which is so graphically described in the *Analects*.[2] Midway between the two stands the counsel of St. Paul (Rom. xiii. 7).

Next in importance to the doctrine of the Five relations in the *Analects* is that of the sufficiency of human nature for virtue. 'Tsang said, the doctrine of our Master is, to be true to the principles of our nature.' Here again is a link between systems which are in some respects wholly divergent. The superior man of the *Analects* is not much

[1] Greek, τὸ ἡγεμονικόν. [2] *Anal.* IV. xvi.

like the true Cynic of the *Discourses*, but in both cases a human ideal is proposed, and in both cases the teacher disclaims the merit of having himself attained it.

We now come to a comparison which involves deeper considerations, and is much more difficult to treat, the relation of strict Stoicism to Buddhism. We saw that pessimism lay at the root of the Buddhist philosophy of life. It was produced by the pressure of all the miseries of existence on one man who felt them keenly, not so much for himself as for others, for mankind at large. The only way of escape was to cease to desire anything. Desire must be cut off, then the sorrow which comes from ungratified desire would be cut off with it. Something not far from this is the fundamental principle of Stoic Ethics. And Epictetus briefly expresses it, when he says, 'Freedom is ensured not by a full measure of the things which we desire, but by riddance of the desire'[1] (*Diss.* IV. i.). For Gotama there were other motives urging him to this solution, motives which the Hindu felt and the Greek did not, the sense that all external objects were an illusion, and the fear

[1] ἀνασκευῇ τῆς ἐπιθυμίας.

of transmigration after death. But the main impulse was the same for the Hindu and the Greek, desire for happiness in the only form in which it seemed to each of them to be attainable, namely tranquillity (*ἀταραξία*), either in its Oriental sublimated form of Nirvâna, or in its conscious and more intelligible form, the apathy, calm independence, liberty of the wise man, who has learnt to seek his good from within himself and from no external source. This liberty is fully treated in an important chapter of the *Discourses* (IV. i.) which should by all means be read.[1] The practical way to the desired result, namely asceticism, was the same for both, except that as the Hindu was even more chimerical than the Greek, the methods of pursuing it were more strict, uncompromising, and inhuman. If the stimulus of the sense of illusion in the external world, and the fear of an endless succession of existences in lower forms of life, were wanting to the outfit of the Stoic, they were replaced by something better suited to move the Western mind, namely the strong moral

[1] A comparison will not fail to suggest itself between the Stoic and the Christian conceptions of liberty.

purpose inherited from Socrates and a chain of successors in the post-Socratic schools. And this moral purpose reposed on the sure foundation of no less strong conviction of individual personality and responsibility, in contrast with that denial of both, which was a leading feature of Buddhism. Finally Buddhism knew no supreme God, while Stoicism in the hands of Epictetus, if not a religion, had gone far towards becoming religious in its teaching of attachment to God[1] (*Diss.* IV. i.), and submission to his leading.

Before leaving the comparison with Buddhism two more points of coincidence may be noticed. The first arises necessarily from the contempt and disregard of external things and the social fabric which were essential to both systems. The almost Christian sense of the universal brotherhood of man, whatever their race, rank or condition, which distinguished the Stoic, is paralleled in Buddhism and anticipated by it, in its protest against the system of caste, in the midst of which it had arisen. The second lies in the veneration felt for the founders of the two systems.

[1] προσκατατάσσειν τῷ Θεῷ.

What Gotama was to his disciples after his death that Socrates was to the later Stoics, so far at least as the cooler and much less imaginative Western mind allowed. He was not indeed worshipped or surrounded with a halo of legend, but he supplied, as we shall see, some measure of that indispensable personal force and attraction, which is only supplied in its fulness by the Living Christ.

The comparison of Socrates with Epictetus need not detain us long. Socrates is the ideal of his successor. His method of dialectic is followed in the conversations of Epictetus with his hearers, though in a rough and ready way, with nothing of the Socratic thoroughness and subtlety. Its aim is not to puzzle and confound, but simply the practical aim of convincing individuals and influencing their lives. Socrates' sayings as recorded both by Xenophon and Plato are constantly quoted in the *Discourses*. Details of conduct which come under discussion are tested by the example of Socrates (*e.g. Diss.* IV. v.), as well as by his teaching. Epictetus is not better than Socrates, it is enough for him if he is not inferior to him (*Diss.* I. ii.). It is enough for the disciple that he be as his

master. Diogenes and Zeno are sometimes coupled with Socrates as authorities, but the latter stands first. Epictetus and his followers are emulators[1] of Socrates. He says to them, 'You who are not yet a Socrates ought to live as one who wishes to be a Socrates' (*Manual*, L.). And with a striking likeness to apostolic teaching as to the great Christian example, he speaks of the death of Socrates as having extended the influence of his life. 'And now Socrates having died, the value to mankind of what he did and said in his lifetime, is not less, nay, it is greater than before' (*Diss.* IV. i.).

Such being the case, it is evident that there is little if any room for contrast between the two, though if we regard the Socrates of Plato as a truer portrait than that of Xenophon, we should say without hesitation that for Socrates the philosophic speculative view of ethics held the foremost place in his interest, and for Epictetus their practical value for conduct. As a natural result of this the immediate result for good of Socrates' teaching on those who heard him was probably far less than that of the ministry of Epictetus.

[1] ζηλωταί.

So we read 'Did Socrates succeed in persuading all his hearers to take care of themselves? No, not the thousandth part of them' (*Diss.* II. i.). In one and only one important particular Epictetus seems to depart from his master's conviction if we may trust the *Phaedo* as representing it. I mean in his silence as to any hope of life after death. This hope seems definitely excluded by his account of what death is in *Diss.* III. xiii. 'God gives the signal for retreat, opens the door, and says to you, Go. Go whither? To nothing terrible, but to the place from whence you came, to friends and kinsmen, namely to the elements. What there was in you of fire goes to fire, of earth to earth, of air to air, of water to water.'

LECTURE V.

EPICTETUS.

We now come to the comparison of the *Discourses* with the teaching of Christ and the Apostles. It is a comparison which has been in our minds throughout, and I have endeavoured from time to time to suggest material for it. I hope I have shown that while the premises of Stoic Ethics were false, yet the honest moral sense and lofty instincts of Epictetus drew out of these premises much that was true and good. Our criticism on the premises has been that external advantages are not worthless but good gifts of God, that vice is not merely ignorance, that emotions are not merely a disturbance of the rational faculty, but must be allowed to have a legitimate place and influence, that will and reason are therefore not the only constituents of a sound humanity, and that external Nature is

not a sufficient or faithful revelation of the Divine character and purpose.

But when Epictetus comes to draw out the practical consequences of the Stoic positions, his delineation of a pure unworldly character comes in some respects, though not in all, very near to the Christian ideal; and not only in spirit, but in actual phrases, reminds us of the teaching of Christ Himself. Let us then go on to examine these coincidences as they occur in the *Discourses* and the *Manual*. A much fuller list may be drawn from the works of Seneca, whose strongly Platonic tendencies brought him nearer Christian thought than the more consistent Stoicism of Epictetus. For such a list I must refer you to the Essay of Bishop Lightfoot already quoted.

At the outset a distinction must be drawn between the coincidences with the words of Christ, and those with the words of apostolic writers, especially St. Paul. The latter may I think be taken to prove St. Paul's familiarity with the common stock of Stoic thought, of which Epictetus, living many years later, also availed himself. For as I have already said, we must not regard the matter of Epictetus' *Discourses* as entirely original, but as common

to him and the later Stoics in general. On the other hand the coincidences with thoughts and expressions in the Gospels are of a different character. They touch the fundamental questions which are bound to arise when any teacher of morals, divine or human, is face to face with weak struggling human nature in its desire and yet its unwillingness to rise to better things.

Let us then take these parallels first:

(1) 'Ye sit weeping about the morrow whence ye may eat' (*Diss.* I. ix.). Compare with this the anxiety about the morrow described in Matt. vi. 25, 34.

(2) Zeus, who never fails to care for one of the smallest of his creatures (*Diss.* III. xxiv.). Compare the care of God for sparrows in Matt. x. 29.

(3) Consider Christ's words, 'Fear not them which kill the body' (Matt. x. 28), and you will find, not indeed the precise words, but the spirit of them in many places in the *Discourses*, especially in *Diss.* I. xxix. Only we shall notice this, that there is nowhere in Epictetus anything like the words which follow in that passage of St. Matthew. There was no room for the fear of God in Stoic

theology. Seneca, indeed, says, 'Who would fear the gods except a madman?'

(4) Along with the preceding topic we may take the conception of 'harm' (*βλάβη*) as dealt with by Epictetus. 'Consider,' he says, 'what harm (or hurt) is, and remember what you have heard from the philosophers' (*Diss.* II. x.). There is no hurt except moral hurt, no loss except moral loss. This is, I suppose, the thought involved in the promise of Christ, 'Nothing shall by any means hurt you' (Luke x. 19).

(5) The same chapter of the *Discourses* reminds us of the great saying as to the gain or loss of the soul in Matt. xvi. 26, and parallels. 'Is there then,' Epictetus asks, 'no energy of the soul which is an advantage to him who possesses it and a loss to him who casts it away?' and he goes on to explain that he means 'modesty, fidelity, affection, benevolence, patience.' He who loses these loses his soul.

(6) Again, the man who fails in his moral obligations is described by Epictetus as being like a worthless vessel, fit only to be cast on the dunghill. Compare with this the casting out of the salt without savour in Luke xiv. 35.

(7) In *Diss.* IV. ii. we read: 'No man can make progress when he is wavering between alternatives.' The phrase comes in a passage on the choice of friends, but it reminds us of 'No man can serve two masters.' The word 'progress' gives the aphorism a moral character, and the choice of friends is being viewed in relation to the moral life.

(8) *Diss.* III. xv. has for its subject, 'Count the cost if you wish to be a Cynic.' Both this chapter and the general tone of *Diss.* III. xxiv. are in the spirit of Luke xiv. 25 ff. and its parable of the builder who began but was not able to finish. Both the human and the Divine master discourage any careless, half-hearted approach, and bid men count the cost of what they are undertaking.

(9) The story of the rich young man (Matt. xix. 16) has its parallel, as I have before observed, in the young man who inquired what sort of a person a Cynic ought to be. The same absolute renunciation is asked for in both cases, but in the one it is renunciation in order to follow a person, and in the other in order to follow a philosophy.

(10) One more resemblance may be noted which goes deep. When a man was consulting him as to how he should persuade his brother to cease being angry with him, Epictetus replied: 'Philosophy does not propose to secure for a man any external thing' (*Diss.* I. xv.). We are reminded of the man who said, 'Master, speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me' (Luke xii. 13). In both cases the teacher refuses to interfere in worldly affairs where worldly advantage is concerned. Christ would not be a 'judge or a divider.' Neither the philosophy of Epictetus nor the Gospel of Christ could safely allow themselves to be drawn into controversies about worldly goods, though they contained principles by which those concerned ought to have been able to resolve their difficulties.

A contrast in the methods of teaching may be added here. Epictetus gives us no parables in the strict sense of the word, with the doubtful exception of the seed growing slowly in *Diss.* IV. viii., which is rather an illustration than a parable. He uses anecdotes and instances from real life where Christ uses parables, though it is, of course, the case

that a certain class of the Gospel parables read like instances from life generalised and adapted. The Eastern audience needed the parable to impress its imagination, but for the Western hearer the instance from life was more congenial and effective.

An interesting illustration of a passage in the narrative of the trial of our Lord may be mentioned here, though it is, of course, foreign to the comparison which we are instituting. 'The Jews cried out, saying, If thou release this man, thou art not Caesar's friend.' Compare with this the question of Epictetus and the reply given in *Diss.* IV. i.: 'Tell me, what is this calamity, hurtful and to be shunned.' 'It is, not to be Caesar's friend.' This was an axiom of every Roman official on which Epictetus pours contempt, and we see the astuteness of the Jews in making use of it to obtain their purpose.[1]

We may now go on to examine the coincidences with the writings of St. Paul.

[1] The parallel between *Diss.* III. xxii. (the self-appointed steward) and Matt. xxiv. 45 is weakened by the fact that the lesson enforced is a different one. But see Lightfoot, *Phil.*[2] p. 313 n.

I must again refer you in the first place to the treatment of this subject by Bishop Lightfoot in his Essay on Seneca and St. Paul.[1] There he includes in his comparison not Seneca only, but Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius also. It is an eloquent and appreciative exposition of all that is best in Stoicism. Yet while doing justice to the points of likeness, he shows how far it falls short of the ethics of the Gospel. We, however, are concerned with Epictetus alone, and at the risk of going over the same ground I must attempt an independent estimate. I will take seven principal topics, and then add a few interesting verbal coincidences.

1. St. Paul is warning the Corinthians against sins of impurity. He enforces his warning by reminding them that their bodies are 'a shrine of the Holy Ghost which is in them, which they have from God' (1 Cor. vi. 19). So Epictetus, dealing with similar temptations, uses a like argument. 'You carry about a god with you and do not know it, poor wretch that you are. Do you think I mean some god of silver or

[1] Bishop Lightfoot, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians.*

gold, carried externally? No, you carry him within yourself, and perceive not that you are polluting him by your impure thoughts and filthy deeds' (*Diss.* II. viii.).

2. St. Paul and Epictetus are at one in their teaching about slavery, a feature of social life most prominent in their time, and most difficult for us to realise in its moral effects. This is how he addresses the master who complains of his slave. 'Slave that you are (*i e.* to your passions), will you not bear patiently with your brother who has Zeus for his father? Will you not remember who you are, and who they are whom you rule over, that they are of one race with you, your brethren by nature, children of Zeus?' And then he concludes with words somewhat to this effect: 'If you have lordship over them, it is by the miserable laws of men, and not by the divine law' (*Diss.* I. xiii.). It is hardly necessary to quote St. Paul in order to show that this is his teaching also. The whole tenor of the remarkable chapter on True Freedom (*Diss.* IV. i.) is to show that the real slavery is that of the man who has not mastered his passions. He who has done this is alone truly free.

He can say, 'I have been set free by God,[1] I know his commandments, henceforth no man can make a slave of me. I have a right and proper vindicator of my liberty' (*Diss.* IV. viii.). Compare with this the Christian assurance that there is true freedom in Christ even for the slave. 'He that is called being a slave is the Lord's freedman' (1 Cor. vii. 22). And the previous verse (21), if interpreted as grammar seems to require,[2] shows St. Paul to be of one mind with Epictetus in his comparative indifference to external freedom, where inward freedom has been attained.

3. No illustration of the Christian life seems to have been more constantly present to St. Paul than that of the public games of Greece. It is equally present in Epictetus as representing the strife of the soul for self-mastery. One quotation will be enough to exhibit the coincidence with St. Paul. 'For men must not shrink who are engaged in the greatest of all combats, but they must take blows.

[1] The essential words 'by God' are omitted in Long's translation, but are in the original.

[2] Translate: 'Although thou canst become free, use it rather,' *i.e.* thy present condition of servitude, as giving sufficient opportunity for a Christian life.

For the combat (*ἀγών*) before us is not for the prize of wrestling or of the "pancratium," but the combat is for good fortune and happiness itself.'[1] Turn to St. Paul and you find that after describing the labours of the competitors in the games he reminds the Christian of the difference between their aim and his. 'Now they do it that they may obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible' (1 Cor. ix. 25).

But while St. Paul shares with the Stoic the illustration from the games of the arena, he does not touch the illustration which Epictetus draws from the sports of children. That life is a combat is in harmony with Stoic and Christian thought alike, but there is no place in Christian thought for the representation of life as a children's game,[2] in which we are to join as long as we are inclined, and no longer (*Diss.* I. xxiv., xxv. and IV. vii.).

4. There is a Stoic ring about the striking

[1] This passage was probably suggested by the splendid passage at the end of the *Gorgias* of Plato, which speaks of 'the great combat which is the combat of life, and greater than every mere earthly contest.'

[2] Matt. xi. 17 ff. is no exception if we consider the purpose for which the illustration is brought forward.

passage in 1 Cor. vii. 29-31. The thought of using the world, and not using it to the full, of dealing with all external relations and possessions with a constant sense of their transitoriness, is precisely the thought which Epictetus expands in *Diss.* III. xxiv.[1]

5. The magnificent conclusion of 1 Cor. iii. is, if it be analysed, a repetition of a saying of Antisthenes to whom reference was made in Lecture I. St. Paul inverts the original order of thought, reasons upwards instead of downwards, and extends the class to whom the saying applies. And he introduces a term in the series, namely Christ, which gives a triumphant certainty to his conclusion. The saying of Antisthenes is preserved by Diogenes Laertius (VI. 72), and is as follows: 'All things belong to the gods, the gods are friends to the wise, the property of friends is common, all things therefore belong to the wise.'

6. The inquiry as to the advisableness of marriage made by the young man who desires to be a Cynic (in *Diss.* III. xxiii.) reminds us of St. Paul's answers in 1 Cor. vii. to similar

[1] Cp. also 2 Esdras xvi. 40-44, though that chapter is part of the later Christian additions to the book.

inquiries from Corinth. The reply which Epictetus gives has a remarkable correspondence with the reply of St. Paul, both in phraseology and, to a certain extent, in the motives alleged. The true Cynic, under present circumstances, like a man in line of battle, must be wholly given to the ministry of God without distraction (ἀπερίσπαστος). This latter word in its adverbial form is the very word employed by St. Paul in the same connexion (1 Cor. vii. 35), and its comparative rarity makes it very remarkable.

7. The argument as to the social duties involved in membership of a body, and the illustration of it from the functions of the members of the human body in 1 Cor. xii. 15 ff. is to be found in Epictetus (*Diss.* II. v.), and in other Greek writers.

It will be observed that all these parallels from St. Paul are drawn from the Epistles to the Corinthians, and no less than three of them from the same chapter, namely 1 Cor. vii.

One or two minor coincidences may be added as examples of a class. The use of the term flesh (σάρξ) in *Diss.* III. vii. resembles St. Paul's usage of it, though the

contrast in the *Discourses* is between the flesh and the soul, not as in St. Paul, between the flesh and the spirit.

Again, 1 Tim. iv. 15, 16 contains two thoroughly Stoic terms. 'Be *diligent in* (μελέτα) these things,[1] give thyself wholly to them; that thy *progress*[2] (προκοπή) may be manifest unto all.'

St. Paul's address, 'O man' in Rom. ii. 1 and ix. 20 with which he presses home his argument, meets us again in the *Discourses*, and may be a reminiscence of the mode of address by teachers in the Stoic schools.

Again in *Diss.* II. xxvi. the description of the man who sins as not doing that which he wills, reminds us of 'What I would not that I do' (Rom. vii. 16), though the idea of sin in that chapter of the *Discourses* is very different from St. Paul's conception of it in the corresponding passage.

The reader will no doubt ask how these numerous correspondences are to be explained. Not, I should say, by supposing any borrowing

[1] ταύτην τὴν μελέτην ἔωθεν εἰς ἑσπέραν μελετᾶν ἔδει. *Diss.* IV. i.

[2] *Diss.* I. iv.

on the part of Epictetus from Christian teaching. I have already in Lecture I. referred to this supposition. Nor is it St. Paul who borrows, at least not in the sense of being indebted to Stoicism either for ethical principles or for their application. He has them independently and from another source. The true explanation is that St. Paul, having been familiar in his youth or early manhood with Stoic as well as with Rabbinic teaching, when he comes to write to a Greek or Grecized community such as the Church of Corinth, can hardly help using the phraseology of Stoicism in his ethical teaching, so far as it is in harmony with Christian feeling, just as he had used Stoic language in his speech at Athens (Acts xvii. 22 ff.).[1] But in respect of doctrinal teaching his Epistles hardly show a trace of this influence. So far, I have said, as it is in harmony with Christian feeling, for the underlying Stoic thought of indifference to all external things

[1] Two parallels with the Epistle of St. James are more difficult to account for in our absence of information as to the education of the writer. Cp. James ii. 18 with *Diss.* I. iv., and James iv. 1 with *Diss.* I. xxii. ἔνθεν πόλεμοι, στάσεις κ.τ.λ.

is not Christian. And certainly apathy, and disregard and contempt of emotions and affections, is the last thing which could be laid to the charge of St. Paul.

One can easily imagine the scorn which Epictetus would have poured on the author of the last four chapters of 2 Corinthians. That Christianity is 'only Stoicism plus a legend' is the most obviously false of all the falsehoods that have obtained currency in the form of epigram. It may also be added that some coincidences are inevitable, because the same moral problems must always occur to thoughtful minds, however different their standpoints may be. Indeed it would not be difficult to show that we have in Stoic writers the philosophical counterparts of such theological questions as Final Perseverance, Assurance of Salvation, Immediate Conversion, Works done before Conversion (Article XIII.), and Antinomianism.[1]

Leaving the subject of comparisons in detail with the New Testament, what will be our verdict upon the whole with regard

[1] Cp. Chrysippus quoted by Plutarch, *De Repugnantiis Stoicorum*, XI., XII., with 1 Tim. i. 8.

to Epictetus and his teaching? He was a transparently earnest man, simply eager to win and amend those who came to him. There is indeed a coarseness in him, characteristic of the school rather than of the individual, which at times is exceedingly unpleasant. But we must remember the coarseness of the social life against which he inveighed, and the class from which he himself was drawn. The coarseness of the Stoic philosopher is as nothing, compared to the indecency of Juvenal the Stoic satirist. There is also a harshness of tone to those whom he addresses, a want of love. He speaks with a whip in his hand. There is nothing of kindly invitation to the weak and ignorant, still less to the sorrowful. We have but to recall the invitation of Christ, 'Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden,' in order to realise the difference between the philosopher and the Saviour.

On the other hand there was in Epictetus a natural piety which could not help expanding in spite of its inconsistency with the pantheism of his theology. He is pious in his surrender and resignation to God. Those

who can enter into the spirit of Bonar's hymn,

> 'Thy way, not mine, O Lord,
> However dark it be,'

or Newman's,

> 'Lead, kindly light,'

must feel a bond of sympathy with one whose favourite verses were the often quoted iambics of Cleanthes:

> 'Lead me, O Zeus, and Thou, O Destiny,
> The way that I am bid by you to go.
> To follow I am ready.'

But if it be a general verdict that is asked for, it must be this: Epictetus has nothing to teach the Christian, I mean nothing which we have not already in the Gospel. So far as his teaching is consistent with Christianity, we experience a zest and attraction in finding moral truth in a new quarter and in new forms, and this testimony from without may have considerable effect for good on some minds. But that is all.

There is no initiative for worldwide action, no mustard seed with the potentiality of a mighty tree. Scan the *Discourses* throughout, and you will find nothing to set on

foot a career of practical love and service to mankind, not even in the chapter on the true Cynic. How could there be, in a system in which all the external sufferings of poor human nature were ignored? The worldwide polity embracing all mankind was a mere dream. There is no word about the manner of its realisation. Contrast with this the Christian idea of the embodiment of the Kingdom of Heaven in a visible society with its manifold activities of love.

You will ask what became of this great system of thought, these earnest teachers, this philosophy, which so far as educated men were concerned was practically the religion of Imperial Rome under the Early Empire? Did it perish in the destruction of the Empire by the barbarian? No, it disappeared long before that. It practically came to an end in the second century. By that time it had done its work of preparation and Christianity took possession of its inheritance. It could not be otherwise. Apart from the essential falsehood of its premises, it appealed to only half the man, to that half which has least power to move the will. The

Gospel appealed to the whole man, both to reason and to affection, and it was met by the devotion of the whole man. In Stoicism man sought after God with an earnestness to which honour is due. But in the Gospel it is God who has sought and found man.

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